

Glasgow Caledonian University Court

Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 20th September 2019 at 9am in the Lantern

Present: Rob Woodward (Chair)*
Dr Douglas Chalmers, Dr Morag Ferguson, Campbell Fitch, Sylvie Freund-Pickavance, Eilidh Fulton, Daniel Gallacher, Dr Bill Gunnyeon, David Halliday, Asif Haseeb, Gordon Jack, Sharon Lowrie, Meg Lustman, Neena Mahal, Professor Ann Priest, Alistair Webster, Professor Stephanie Young (Vice-Chair)

Apologies: Professor Pamela Gillies, Peter Baguley, Ian Kerr, and Lesley Thomson

In attendance: Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal Governance
Claire Hulsen, Director of Strategy & Planning*
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)*
Lucy Strachan, Head of Governance (Secretary)*

***Absent for the last item of the meeting, the Chair's Appraisal.**

Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair extended a warm welcome to David Halliday, the new governor elected by professional and support services staff in June, and Lucy Strachan, the new Head of Governance. The Chair confirmed that the meeting would be followed by the first event in this session's Coffee, Cake and a Concert series when governors could talk to students and members of staff before enjoying a performance by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

1. Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 20th June 2019

The minutes of the previous Court meeting were **approved** subject to a revisiting of item 11.6.

2. Matters Arising

The Chair noted that all Matters Arising were completed.

3. Declaration of Interests

Court members noted the Register of Court Members' Interests and the Chair confirmed that no changes to the Register have been notified to Court.

4. Items Brought by the Chair of Court

4.1 The Chair gave thanks to Bernard Ponsonby who had delivered on the previous evening his reflections on Brexit in an excellent address to Court members, who had been joined by staff and students. He thanked the members of Court for attending the previous day the Principal's overview of progress in academic year 2018-19 against Strategy 2020 goals and the 2020 Key Performance Indicators. The Chair confirmed that the three Court members who had been unable to attend the session would be provided with video access to the presentation as delivered to staff on the preceding day.

ACTION: Video of Review of the Year to be circulated to members of Court. (Head of Governance)

- 4.2 The Chair also thanked the members of Court for their participation in the Court evaluation exercise which had included his individual meetings with governors throughout the summer period. The conclusion on the performance of Court and individual members was generally positive both at an individual and Court level. There was a positive movement from the prior year. Following the feedback from Court members, a list of proposed key actions for implementation would be presented to the next meeting of Court in a tracker document.

**ACTION: List of key action arising as a result of the Court evaluation exercise to be circulated to Court members.
(Chair and University Secretary)**

5. Principal's and Executive Board Report

- 5.1 Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy) presented the Principal's report and drew attention to the recent announcement by the Government regarding the introduction of a new two-year post study work visa for students starting courses from 2020. This was noted as a positive development. However, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy) cautioned that the University would have to monitor whether this was having an impact through students deferring courses until the 2020-21 academic year. The publication by the SFC of the consultation on the future of Widening Access and Retention Fund (WARF) was also highlighted and it was noted that this together with the confirmation from SFC that the WARF funding pot would not be increased created a risk for the University. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy) referred to the new Audit Scotland Report 2019: Finances of Scottish Universities, which provided an important overview of the current financial standing of the sector.
- 5.2 The meeting noted that the role of technology should be included within the list of key priorities for 2019-20 and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) confirmed that a project would be run over the academic session with students and staff to confirm learning objectives and the use of technology in delivering those objectives.

6 Chief Operating Officer Report

- 6.1 The Chief Operating Officer presented her report and highlighted the delay in the implementation of the Imaging Centre due to the supplier putting a pause on the project and citing uncertainty linked to Brexit. It had previously been agreed that, if there were to be a delay, then the Students Association would be given the option of relocating as planned or remaining for the time being in the North Hannover Street building, and the Association had chosen to remain. The Chief Operating Officer thanked the Students Association for their accommodation of this delay and confirmed that she would continue to pursue the progress of the project with the supplier.
- 6.2 The Chief Operating Officer reported to the meeting that the negotiation of the new lease for Fashion Street, London remained a work in progress and confirmed that the new lease would be brought to Court for approval before signature.
- 6.3 The positive year-end balance of 2018-19 was welcomed by Court. There was recognition of the need to generate a surplus to secure resilience and long-term sustainability and secure this with an appropriate staffing profile.

7 Student President's Report

- 7.1 The Student President reported that the objectives for individual student officers and the team were under discussion. The announcement made at the start of the month with regard to the scrapping of Graduation Fees from Summer 2020 had been very positively received by students, as had the creation of a Circle Society associated with the Chancellor's Circle charity and Freshers Week activity.

7.2 The Court discussed the Key Performance Indicators Outcomes for Year 3 included in the Student President's Report and the Student President confirmed that the Student's Association was performing well in comparison to the other Student Associations in the sector.

8. University Secretary's Report

8.1 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. In particular:

8.1.1 Court noted that the Court Strategy Day was to be held on 17th October 2019 and would be followed by dinner;

8.1.2 Court **approved** the University's Statement of Primary Responsibilities and noted that a report had been included on delivery against the Statement of Primary Responsibilities for 2018-19; and

8.1.3 Court **approved** the University's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for publication on the website and agreed that the University should be promoting compliance with the Modern Slavery Act in any jurisdiction in which it operated.

8.2 Court noted that the University would be holding its inaugural public stakeholder event at 4.00pm on Thursday 21st November 2019. The University Secretary confirmed that the public stakeholder event offered a good opportunity to communicate with the wider community and that Court members were encouraged to attend. A detailed communications strategy for the event would be prepared in order to maximise this opportunity to engage with the public as well as internal stakeholders.

8.3 Court members also noted the calendar of Court and Committee Meeting dates for 2019-20 attached as an appendix to the University Secretary's Report.

9 Strategic Report 2018-19 – Review of progress against Strategy 2020 KPIs

9.1 Court discussed the Strategic Report for the academic year 2018-19 which provided an overview of progress against Strategy 2020 goals and the 2020 Indicators (KPIs). It was reported to Court that the University continued to perform well with many KPIs being maintained or exceeded, although threats to performance were similarly noted not least the potential impact of Brexit on research income. The following points were highlighted:

- the University continued to achieve excellence in widening access;
- international student satisfaction had increased to 92%; and
- the recognition that the University had received for its achievements in environmental sustainability through the People and Planet University League 2019, where the University was rated first in Scotland.

9.2 Court considered the need to continue to create meaningful key performance indicators with a clear understanding of the intended impact of each as part of the development of Strategy 2030 and discussed the use of the report to inform key stakeholders, including staff, of the progress of the University. It was agreed that a summary document of the report, which could usefully include infographics, would be created and would be made available at the public stakeholder event.

ACTION: Summary document of Strategy Report to be created for distribution at public stakeholder event. (DVC Strategy)

10 Annual report on institution-led review of quality and governing body statement of assurance for AY 2018-19

- 10.1 Court **approved** for submission to the Scottish Funding Council the Annual Report on Institution-Led Review of Quality and Governing Body Statement of Assurance for the Academic Year 2018-19. This statement provided commentary on the University's quality assurance and enhancement processes and activities as part of the University's annual reporting to the SFC.

11. ELIR 4 Draft Reflective Analysis (RA)

- 11.1 Court noted the ELIR 4 Draft Reflective Analysis report which was to be submitted to the review panel before the end of November. Court was informed that the report had been developed in conjunction with staff and students and the final version of the report would be submitted in hard version and web version with live web links embedded within the document. Court provided feedback and commented that the report provided Court members with the comfort that the quality enhancement processes within the University were working effectively. The final document with live links should be added to the Convene library.

ACTION: Final ELIR 4 Reflective Analysis Report to be added to the Convene library. (Head of Governance)

12. National Student Survey 2019

- 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 noted that, while some parts of the University had performed outstandingly well, the University's overall NSS satisfaction remained static at 81% which placed it behind the averages for Scotland and the UK for overall satisfaction by 3%. Court agreed that close examination of best practice in relation to improving the student experience found among those leading the sector in NSS performance would assist the University to achieve a step change in its aim of delivering an outstanding student experience which was reflected in the NSS results. It was agreed that another dedicated post-Court session to discuss the National Student Survey should be scheduled at a suitable point in the current session to allow inclusion of an account of progress with implementation of actions arising from student feedback.

ACTION: Session to be scheduled to allow inclusion of an account of progress with implementation of actions arising from student feedback. (University Secretary)

13. Longitudinal Education Outcomes 2019

- 13.1 Court noted the report on Longitudinal Education Outcomes 2019, which provided data on the median earnings by subject of students one, three and five years after they graduated. Court welcomed the outcome in the report that one year after graduation, GCU ranked in the top three Universities in Scotland in eight subject areas for total median earnings.

14. Research Trimester C Report 2018-19

- 14.1 Court noted a report from the PVC Research which contained information on research success in respect of funding and staff achievements. It was agreed that the report should be renamed "Research Update" for the next Court Meeting.

ACTION: Research Trimester C Report to be renamed "Research Update" going forward. (PVC Research)

15. African Leadership College Partnership: Report on Annual Academic and Contract Review

- 15.1 Court discussed a report from the DVC Academic on the progress of the partnership between the African Leadership College (ALC) and the University. Court noted that the first graduation ceremony for Social Science and Business Management Students had been held with great success on 12th June 2019. The DVC Academic highlighted to Court that the ALU Board had decided to reposition ALC

Mauritius and ALU Rwanda as Higher Education Institutions run on a not for profit basis and a number of philanthropic donors were now in discussion with ALU.

16. Renewal of Facility Letter and Resolution – Bank of Scotland plc

16.1 Court considered and **approved** the renewal of the facility letter and resolution with Bank of Scotland plc. In approving the facility letter and resolution, Court noted that the terms and provisions of facilities detailed in the Bank Facility Amendment Letter previously approved by Court in September 2018 had not been amended. Court members noted that the Facility Letter had been approved by resolution of the Board of Directors of GCUC Ltd and of GCU Academy Ltd at their meetings held on 19th September 2019.

17. GCNYC Board of Trustees Report from Meeting on 28th June 2019

17.1 Court noted an update report from the meeting of the GCNYC Board of Trustees held on 28th June 2019.

17.2 Court noted that Dr Walter Roettger, the interim Provost and Chief Academic Officer at GCNYC, would be attending the next Court meeting on 22nd November 2019 and agreed that time would be set aside for an in-depth discussion on GCNYC at the end of that meeting.

**ACTION: Session to be scheduled at the next Court meeting on 22nd November 2019 to discuss GCNYC in detail.
(Head of Governance).**

18. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of Court will be **Friday 22nd November 2019** at 9.00am preceded by a dinner at 6pm on Thursday 21st November 2019.

19. Chair's Appraisal

In compliance with the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance 2017, the Vice-Chair led the Court in an appraisal of the Chair.