

## Glasgow Caledonian University Court

### Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April at 9am via Online Conferencing Facilities

**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, Stephanie Young (Vice-Chair), Ian Kerr, Lesley Thomson, Dr Morag Ferguson, Dr Douglas Chalmers.

**Apologies:** None

**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  
Claire, Hulsen, Director of Strategy

#### Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed Court Members and noted that this would be the last Court meeting that would be attended by Eilidh Fulton as she will be stepping down as Student President at the end of May. The Chair congratulated the Student President on the strong leadership that she had demonstrated during her term in office and thanked her for her positive contribution to Court.

#### 1. Minutes

1.1 Court noted that the minutes of the Court meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020 had been approved by prior circulation.

#### 2. Matters Arising

2.1 Court noted a report on the matters arising from the Court meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.

2.2 Court noted that the University remained keen to conclude the matter and make the payments in respect of the claims by BaxterStorey staff for which it had inherited liability. However, the University remained unable to do so for reasons associated with the new representation of the claimants. The Court asked to be kept apprised of any changes and given notice of when the sum was to be paid once that was known.

**ACTION: Court to be kept informed of any changes in relation to the claims and given notice of when the sum was to be paid once that was known. (COO)**

#### 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.

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

- 4.1 On behalf of Court, the Chair thanked the Executive, the staff and students of the University for their herculean efforts to respond to the Covid-19 crisis and that the Governors were very proud of their association with the University and the way that it was dealing with the situation.
- 4.2 The Chair noted that the Governors were committed to supporting the University through this difficult time. The focus at present is on addressing the immediate crisis but that Court would, through its Committees, assist with the analysis of options for what the future could be and how the University should respond.

#### **5. Principal's and Vice-Chancellor and Executive Board Report**

- 5.1 The Principal presented her report which set out a summary of items arising since the previous Court meeting in the context of the impact that Covid-19 has had on the University. The Principal drew particular attention to the following:
  - 5.1.1 The pride that the University feels for its student nurses, 99% of whom have volunteered to work for the NHS during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the students on the BSc Paramedic Science programme who have also joined the Covid-19 NHS emergency response working with the Scottish Ambulance Service. The University is also using portable 3D printers to make plastic headbands for protective health equipment for the NHS such as face shields and has donated 6,700 nitrile gloves, 600 non-sterile gloves, 1,400 aprons and 32 new safety glasses to NHS services.
  - 5.1.2 The University's Emergency Response team meets daily to co-ordinate the response of the University to the Covid-19 crisis and comprises the Principal, the Executive Team, the Student President and the Student President-Elect. The inclusion of the University's student leaders ensures that the student perspective is reflected in all deliberations. The Joint Consultative Committee is meeting fortnightly.
  - 5.1.3 The Scottish Government Minister for Further, Higher Education and Science, Richard Lochhead, has maintained continued engagement with the University sector in relation to Covid-19 and has established a Covid-19 Group which draws membership from across the sector and shares information, gathers intelligence and coordinates a collective response to key challenges across the sector.
- 5.2 Court recognised the considerable challenges faced by the University sector in light of Covid-19 and **agreed** that it will review the implications of it on the University at its meeting in June once the implications of the pandemic on the sector and GCU in particular are better understood.

**ACTION: Court to review the implications of Covid-19 on the University at its meeting in June. (Governors)**

- 5.3 The Principal reported to Court that the University had moved up a place to 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 767 universities in the recent THE University Impact Ranking, and that was despite a 60% increase in global participation. Court commended the continued strong performance of the University in THE University Impact Ranking.

#### **6. Chief Operating Officer's Report**

- 6.1 The Chief Operating Officer presented her report on the key activities across the portfolio taking place in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and highlighted the following points:

- 6.1.1 Colleagues across the University have demonstrated exemplary resilience, discipline and have truly lived the values of the University in the way that they have responded to this crisis and the speed with which the University has transitioned to an entirely new operating model.
- 6.1.2 The financial implications of the Covid-19 pandemic will be significant on the University and the Court and its Committees will be engaged in reviewing impact and mitigations.
- 6.1.3 Due to the financial difficulties being faced by BaxterStorey as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic, the University has agreed to provide short term financial support to BaxterStorey to assist with bridging the gap until the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme starts to make payments.
- 6.1.4 The Estates team have demonstrated the values of the University in dealing with the impact of Covid-19 and Security colleagues remain on campus working full rotating shifts. Caledonian Court remains open with 150 students being housed there at present. However, this number is set to increase with the University shortly welcoming students who have volunteered to work for the NHS in health related roles and who have sought accommodation to keep them away from their family for health reasons.
- 6.1.5 The University is taking a caring and sensitive approach to colleagues who are in roles that can be delivered from home, but they are unable to do so, or are limited in what they can deliver, for reasons including personal health, caring or home schooling. The University has not prescribed what must happen as each situation is unique and should be managed locally but has committed to supporting colleagues who find themselves in such a situation and has made it clear that it expects line managers to take a supportive stance.

## **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 in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Student President highlighted the following in particular:
  - 7.1.1 The Student President and Student President-elect have been involved in attending daily meetings with the University's Executive Board which were established to co-ordinate the University's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - 7.1.2 The feedback from students has been positive on the decision taken by the University to release students from their accommodation payments at Caledonian Court as well as the rapid move by the University to provide online learning to students.
  - 7.1.3 The key concern highlighted by students regarding the current situation is the effect on their mental health and wellbeing. Court noted that wellbeing support and advice is being provided online to students by the University and that further work is being undertaken to identify additional ways that mental health support can be provided to students.

## **8 University Secretary's Report**

- 8.1 Court received an update on progress with the recruitment process to find two Lay Governors, one with a legal background and the other with financial experience and qualification, as this second appointee would be appointed as the Chair designate of the Audit Committee. The University Secretary reported that there had been a high calibre of applicants and that applicants had now been shortlisted for both governor roles.
- 8.2 Court **approved** the final version of the GCU Amendment Order of Council 2020 (the "**Order**") and authorised the University Secretary to agree, on behalf of Court, any minor amendments to the Order which might be required following the Scottish Government internal checking

process and/or during the Privy Council approval process without the need to obtain further approval from Court.

8.3 Court noted the Calendar of Court and Committee Dates for 2020/21 and the University Secretary confirmed that there would be a change to the calendar to accommodate a joint Audit Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting in October to review the draft financial statements. A revised version of the Calendar would be circulated.

8.4 Court noted the Complaint Handling Report for 2018/19.

## **9 Final Draft of Outcome Agreement 2020/21**

9.1 Court considered the report on the final Outcome Agreement and National Measures 2020/21 and noted the letter from the Chief Executive of the Scottish Funding Council on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020 which had confirmed that the SFC would not seek to recover funds for shortfalls against Outcome Agreement targets where these are related to Covid-19 for 2019/20. Court **approved** the final Outcome Agreement and National Measures 2020/21 for submission to the SFC prior to the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

## **10 Student Recruitment Report**

10.1 Court considered a report from the DVC Strategy which provided a high level overview of student recruitment in academic year 2019/20 as at 6 March 2020 as well as the early implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on 2020/21 recruitment of home and international students. Court noted the actions which the University is undertaking to address the recruitment challenges arising from Covid-19 and the summary of scenario planning that is being conducted.

10.2 Court noted that the Student Recruitment Report was based on the student numbers that are reported to HESA and therefore excluded students at the Caledonian College of Engineering in Oman (now part of the New University of Science and Technology in Oman), African Leadership College, INTO and certain distance and work-based learning students. Court **agreed** that a report should be presented to Court annually which addresses Transnational Education recruitment.

**ACTION: Annual report to be presented to Court on Transnational Education recruitment. (DVC Strategy)**

## **11 2020 HESA Performance Indicators**

11.1 Court considered a report from the DVC Strategy which provides an overview of the University's performance in the 2020 HESA Performance Indicators relating to participation of under-represented groups and the teaching quality metrics of projected outcome and non-continuation. Court noted that the University has seen an improvement in key areas and commended the strong performance of the University in the context of the HE sector in Scotland.

## **12 Strategy 2030**

12.1 Court noted its support for Strategy 2030 observing the strength and relevance of the University's mission, vision and goals in the context of a future environment heavily influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Court **agreed** that, given prevailing circumstances, the Strategy launch would be postponed to December 2020 / January 2021 and prior to the launch the Court would further review the Strategy and KPIs with their associated targets in light of unfolding external events.

**ACTION: Strategy 2030 and KPIs with the associated targets to be presented to Court and reviewed prior to launch. (DVC Strategy).**

### **13. Research**

- 13.1 Court noted the update on the preparations for REF2021 and confirmed that although the submission date for REF2021 is postponed indefinitely due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the census date (being the date on which staff in all Higher Education Institutions who will have outputs submitted to the REF are to be in post) is to remain as 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 at present.
- 13.2 The PVC Research provided Court with an update on the positive stories in research with a focus on the contribution of researchers at the University to the Covid-19 response as well as the operational responses of the University's research community to the move to remote working. Court in particular noted that Professor Sharon Hutchinson has been drafted by Health Protection Scotland to work on establishing a 'Covid-19 Cohort' and that Professor Jacqui Reilly, co-Lead of the Centre for Living 'Safeguarding Health through Infection Prevention' Research Group is intensively involved in NHS and Scottish Government planning in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Court further noted that the Research Continuity Group has been established to facilitate the rapid move to remote working and to address the wider implications of the potential impacts of the Coronavirus and has met six times, once face-to-face and the remainder remotely.

### **14. GCNYC**

- 14.1 The DVC Strategy provided an update on the activities that had been undertaken at GCNYC in order to address the issues arising as a result of Covid-19. GCNYC has focussed on moving to on-line teaching and the feedback received from students has been positive. Court noted that the move to on-line learning at GCNYC has required statutory notifications to be provided to the various governing authorities and that all required notifications had been made.
- 14.2 Court noted that the new Vice-President and Provost for GCNYC, Dr Jacqueline LeBlanc, had started her role earlier than planned and had already hosted an on-line meeting to introduce herself to staff, faculty and students.

### **15. University Senate**

- 15.1 Court noted the report from the meeting of the University Senate held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- 15.2 Court noted the report from the extraordinary meeting of the University Senate held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020.
- 15.3 Court **approved** the revised composition of Senate, agreed by Senate at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020, in compliance with the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

### **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 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.
- 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 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

### **17. Media Coverage Analysis – March Update**

- 17.1 Court noted the Media Coverage Analysis Update Report for March.

**18. Date of Next Meeting**

18.1 The date of the next meeting of Court is Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 9.00AM.