

University Court

Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 20th June 2013

(Minutes 12.180 - 12.233)

Present: Mr Antony Brian, Chair
Mrs Hazel Brooke (Vice Chair), Mr John Chapman, Ms Tracy Findlay, Professor Pamela Gillies, Ms Laura Gordon, Mr Ian Gracie, Mr Tom Halpin, Mr Gordon Jack, Mr Matt Lamb, Dr Rajan Madhok, Dr James Miller, Mr Hugh O'Neill, Mr Iain Stewart, Mr Graham Scott, Mr David Wallace. Mr Alistair Webster and Professor Stephanie Young

In attendance: Ms Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal Governance
Professor Doug Greenhalgh, Executive Dean, School of Engineering and Built Environment and PVC
Mr Alex Killick, Director of People
Professor Mike Mannion, Vice-Principal & Pro Vice Chancellor Research
Mr Gerry Milne, Acting Chief Finance Officer
Professor Karen Stanton Vice-Principal & Pro Vice-Chancellor International & External Relations
Professor John Wilson, Executive Dean of the Glasgow School *for* Business & Society and Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching
Ms Jackie Main, Director of Student Experience
Ms Jo Edwards, Director of Policy and Planning

Mrs Deborah Donnet, Secretary

Apologies: Professor Veronica James, Executive Dean, School of Health and Life Science and PVC

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed Mr Matt Lamb, President of the Students' Association, to his first meeting. The Chair also welcomed Mr Gerry Milne to his first meeting as Acting Chief Financial Officer.

Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 25th April 2013

12.180 Agreed Document UC12/92, the unconfirmed draft minutes of the Court meeting held on 25th April 2013 were an accurate record.

Matters Arising Briefing Note

12.181 Noted Document UC12/93, which provided an update on matters arising from the meeting of Court held on 25th April 2013.

Chair's Report

12.182 Noted

- i. Document UC12/94 a report from the Chair of Court on the activities he had undertaken, and meetings he had attended, on behalf of Court.
- ii. The Chair reported that Court's comments on the Draft Scottish Code of Good HE Governance had been submitted to the Steering Group and it was

anticipated that the final Code would be published in July.

Principal's and Executive Board Report

- 12.183 Noted Document UC12/95, the Principal's and Executive Board's report to Court.
- 12.184 Reported By the Principal in response to a question on the Outcome Agreement, that there was variation across the sector in relation to the development of each university's Outcome Agreement, but that the University had worked closely with the SFC in developing its Outcome Agreement and was happy with the result. As the process matured it was expected that there would be less variation in future years. Outcome Agreements were being published on the SFC website in June and a link would be available from the University website.

University Secretary's Report

- 12.185 Noted Document UC12/96, the University Secretary's report to Court.
- 12.186 Reported
- i. By the University Secretary and VP Governance, that in line with usual practice, there should be delegation of power to the Chair over the summer recess. This was agreed by the Court.
 - ii. That, while the emergency response and business continuity had been appropriate to the circumstances of the recent Scottish Power supply failure, the incident and its handling were being reviewed and the Business Continuity Plan would be developed in light of lessons learned.
 - iii. That two new Staff Governors had been appointed, Dr Douglas Chalmers (Academic) and Ms Davena Rankin (Professional and Support), and it was agreed to circulate biographical information to Court members.

GCU Student Numbers 2012/13

- 12.187 Noted Document UC12/97, a summary overview of student numbers for GCU Glasgow and GCU London.
- 12.188 Reported
- i. By the Director of Policy and Planning that additional contextual information to the figures provided were included in the Internationalisation Strategy and the Student Experience papers also on the agenda for this meeting.
 - ii. That the university was operating in an increasingly competitive sector and had taken steps to strengthening its offering including undertaking the portfolio refresh, developing new courses and exploring new markets. Whilst there had been an increase in postgraduate research students, there had been a reduction in taught postgraduate numbers and undergraduate student number remained steady and this was a pattern broadly reflected across the sector.
- 12.189 Discussed Further clarification was sought regarding the student number targets set by the SFC and it was agreed that additional information on this and other points raised be circulated after the meeting.

Draft Budget 2013/14

12.190	Considered		Document UC12/98, the draft budget for 2013/2014 and the financial estimates for 2014-2016.
12.191	Noted	i.	The draft budget had been crafted to continue to resource the implementation of the strategic goals of the Corporate Strategy 2015. The Principal highlighted the main points in the draft budget indicating that the forward budget projections beyond 2013-14 were prepared in the context of potentially challenging times. It was therefore prudent for the University to be realistic and cautious with future surplus projections and essential for the University to grasp reprofiling opportunities in the coming year to lay a strong foundation for new income growth to take the University Strategy beyond 2015. She indicated that in addition to securing core activity, the University would be undertaking a range of plans to review the cost/income ratio, transforming the performance of the University in key areas and providing continued stimulus for growth and enhanced quality of provision.
		ii.	The chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee reported that the Committee had thoroughly discussed the draft budget and had stressed the need to correct any structural deficits in Schools, to review income lines which were under pressure and to address cost base issues. The Committee had also discussed the budgeted surplus figure. These discussions had informed the budget presented to Court. Overall the budget ensured sustainability whilst recognising the challenges that lay ahead.
		iii.	The key financial and policy assumptions.
12.192	Discussed		Having discussed the budget and future HE context thoroughly and having sought and received clarification on points of detail, Court expressed its support and commended the Principal and the Executive for presenting an ambitious but prudent budget.
12.193	Agreed		To approve the draft budget for 2013/2014 and estimates for 2014-2016 for submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

Key Performance Indicators update 2012/13.

12.194	Considered		Document UC12/99, the annual update on progress against the University's 2015 KPIs.
12.195	Reported	i.	By the Director of Policy and Planning that the data in the report demonstrated that the University had continued to improve with the successful delivery of most of the key performance indicators.
		ii.	Two areas remained a priority for future action <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International fee income; and• League Table positioning.
12.196	Discussed		The Court discussed various aspects of the KPIs including the baseline for the Business Academy KPI, the basis of certain percentages, the impact of a large 'living at home' student population versus a residential student population on the Students' Association, the target areas for the REF and the format of the KPI

report itself. In relation to the NSS results (Figure 7), it was noted that the Scottish sector was very divergent with the average being skewed by the high results achieved by St Andrews University. In conjunction with the Students' Association, the University was working to improve the scores and it was hoped that the 2012/13 results, which were due to be published in late August, would show an improvement in all areas.

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| 12.197 | Agreed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To note the report and that it should adhere to its current format for future years. ii. To commend the University on the very considerable progress made over the last year and to note where action was underway to address certain areas. iii. That further clarification on student mobility and the NSS be circulated after the meeting. |
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Internationalisation Strategy 2015 – GCU Global 6 Month Update

12.198	Noted	Document UC12/100, a summary of the key activities and achievements during the first 6 months of the Internationalisation Strategy.
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| 12.199 | Reported | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. By the VP and PVC International and External Relations that this was a broadly based strategy in which international student recruitment was only one, albeit an important element. In this regard, Professor Stanton observed that meeting the target in 2015 strategy would be an exceptionally difficult challenge, not least because the target had been set against a baseline year which had proved to be the best year that the University had experienced and before the full extent of UKBA regulation was apparent. There had been a wide variety of activity since the Internationalisation Strategy had been approved by Court in December 2013 and key areas included supporting international student recruitment, developing new international partnerships in target markets and reviewing and refreshing marketing and process to support the Strategy. ii. Whilst the international student recruitment market was very competitive, there were some indications that the University's position was growing stronger: applications were up on last year and significant effort was being put into converting applications into acceptances. |
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| 12.200 | Discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The role of agents was raised and Court were advised that an agents' "familiarisation" trip had recently been held at GCU London and the feedback from this had been very positive. ii. Articulating international students were a potential growth area, although there were visa implications. A 2+2 honours/masters package was an option to be explored. iii. In addition to ensuring appropriate pre-sessional or in-sessional language support for international students it was also essential to ensure there was appropriate cultural awareness to prepare students for what was often a different academic and assessment culture. |
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GCU New York – Project Update

- 12.201 Noted Document UC12/101, by the VP and PVC International and External Relations informing on the progress in the establishment of the satellite campus in New York.
- 12.202 Reported
- i. By the VP and PVC International and External Relations that the project was on target and that the lease for the premises at 51 Astor Street had been signed the previous week by the Principal. Court members were given a promotional brochure for the NY office showing photographs of 51 Astor Street and the immediate area surrounding the campus. Ms Cara Smyth had been appointed as the Vice-President for New York. She would chair phase two of the project, to commence after the launch on 26 September 2013, which included applying to the State Education Department for a licence to allow the University to offer its degree bearing programmes. Professor Stanton paid tribute to the considerable work undertaken by Mr Stephen Holt of GCU London who was the NY project manager.
 - ii. That the PWC audit on the management of the GCU NY project was complete and that no substantive issues had been raised.
- 12.203 Discussed
- i. Court welcomed the good progress made whilst recognising the considerable work that remained to be undertaken.
 - ii. In response to a question on the student experience, that lessons had been learned from the establishment of GCU London and the Director of Student Experience was working with the project team in establishing the NY campus.
 - iii. In clarification to a query regarding two different figures for income in 2015/16 the Acting Chief Financial Officer reported that this was because one figure was a Business As Usual calculation whilst the other related to net present value.

GCU London – Update

- 12.204 Noted Document UC12/102, an update on the key activities and achievements of GCU London for 2012/13.
- 12.205 Reported
- By the VP and PVC International and External Relations that GCU London was about to enter its third year of a 5 year business plan and had performed very well in the last year. The recent PWC audit of the operational effectiveness of the campus had reported with a “low risk” classification, and there was confidence that GCU London would continue to support the University’s strategic objectives as set out in the University Strategy 2015.
- 12.206 Discussed
- i. It was confirmed that overall income and student headcount had increased. Fee income would be slightly lower than budget, however, reflecting scholarships and bursaries with this being managed within staff and other costs savings.
 - ii. GCU London’s Cultural and Community Engagement activities were particularly welcomed by Court and it was noted that they fostered a “feel-good factor” for the University.

Student Outcomes Report 2011/12

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| 12.207 | Noted | i. | Document UC12/103, the Student Outcomes Report 2011/12 which brought together commentary and analysis on student demographics, outcomes, satisfaction and key performance indicators relating to the Student Experience for the academic year 2011/12. |
| 12.208 | Reported | i. | By the Director of Student Experience that the report summarised key messages from a number of detailed reports previously submitted to Court during the 2012/13 academic session, and provided an overview of the student journey. She emphasised that, while it had the value of being holistic, the limitation of the report was that it was historical. The Principal would provide a more current overview at the Court Awayday in October. |
| | | ii. | In future it was proposed to submit to the February Court meeting two reports, one quantitative and the other a more qualitative student experience report. These would relate to the implementation of the Strategy for Learning and an Annual Student Experience Report which would be aligned to the Student Experience Framework. |

Student Experience Framework 2013-2017

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| 12.209 | Noted | | Document UC12/104, the Student Experience Framework. |
| 12.210 | Reported | i. | By the Director of Student Experience that the Student Experience Framework set out the strategic direction for the delivery of the GCU student experience, with the overarching vision that by 2017, 100% of students will recommend the University as offering a truly outstanding experience. This was demanding but properly aspirational and should be seen against a background of considerable existing activity. The Framework was at least in part about joining up current activity coherently and for greater impact. |
| | | ii. | The Framework detailed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What students can expect from the University and what in turn, the University expects from its students (The “GCU Commitment”); and• What the key priority student experience themes are for 2013-2017 and how these will be delivered and measured. A more concise applicant/student version of the Framework focusing on the GCU Commitment will be launched in September 2013. |
| | | iii. | The Framework will be monitored by a Student Experience Forum which will report to the Executive Board with an annual report to Court. |
| | | iv. | The Student Experience Framework had been approved by Senate at its meeting on 14 th June 2013 with annual monitoring, although consideration would be given to a six monthly interim report. |
| 12.211 | Discussed | i. | Court welcomed the Framework which brought cohesion to the considerable work undertaken by the University to ensure and enhance the quality of the student experience. The Court also welcomed the new scope for consistency in annual monitoring presented by this approach. |

- ii. Various elements of the “GCU Commitment”, having noted that most of the commitments were taken from existing documentation and were already being implemented.

Student Association Trimester 2 Report

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| 12.212 | Noted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Document UC12/105, a report on the activities in which the Students’ Association had been engaged during Trimester 2 in the academic year 2012/13. ii. The new President of the Students’ Association introduced the report and drew Court’s attention to the main highlights. |
| 12.213 | Discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Court commended the range of activities in which the Association was involved, the increasing level of engagement with students and the high number of awards the Association had won over the recent year. It was noted that this apparent success was at odds with the poor score the Students’ Association received in the NSS and it was felt that if students were made aware of the wide range of activities undertaken by the Association, it may have a positive impact on the NSS results. ii. There was concern that it appeared that Nightline had been forced to close on four occasions due to telephone bill payment problems and the Student President agreed to investigate this. iii. The increasing number of students seeking advice from the Advice Centre was raised, and the Student President noted that this was mainly due to one-off enquiries. |

Senate Report

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| 12.214 | Noted | Document UC12/106 report on the items discussed at Senate on 14 th June 2013. |
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Strategy For Learning

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| 12.215 | Noted | Document UC12/104, the Strategy for Learning 2013-2020. |
| 12.216 | Reported | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. By the Executive Dean GSBS and Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, that the Strategy for Learning (SfL) had at its core the goal to develop graduates who will be proficient in their discipline, enterprising, responsible and capable of filling leadership roles in different organisational and cultural contexts. ii. The SfL had been developed following extensive internal and external consultation and was inspired by the University’s mission and strategic goals. iii. The SfL highlighted the importance of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A transformative approach to learning; • Flexible learning pathways and partnerships, particularly with colleges; • Digital learning; and • Learning and teaching excellence |

- iv. The portfolio refresh currently being undertaken in Schools would be taken forward in the context of the SFL.
- v. The Strategy for Learning had been approved by Senate on 14th June 2013.

12.217 Agreed To commend and endorse the Strategy for Learning 2013-2020.

Revised Complaints Handling Procedure

12.218 Considered Document UC12/106, a report informing that a Model Complaint Handling Procedure (MCHP) for the Higher Education sector was published in 19th December 2012 and all higher education institutions were required to confirm to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) their adoption, or intention to adopt, the MCHP by 30th August 2013.

12.219 Reported By the University Secretary and VP Governance that the University had prepared a Complaints Handling Procedure in line with the MCHP and that this had been approved by Senate at its meeting on 14th June 2013 for implementation in August.

12.220 Agreed To endorse the Glasgow Caledonian University Complaints Handling Procedure for implementation in August 2013 in line with SPSO requirements and amend the address of the Students Association given in the document.

Staff Policy Committee Report

12.221 Noted Document UC12/109 a report on the substantive items discussed at the Staff Policy Committee meeting on 22nd May 2013.

Conduct and Capability Policy

12.222 Agreed Document UC12/110, the revised Conduct and Capability Policy which had been developed with the JCC Policy Forum and reviewed and agreed by the Staff Policy Committee.

Health and Safety Committee Report

12.223 Noted Document UC12/111 a report on the substantive items discussed at the Health and Safety Committee meeting on 28th May 2013.

Remuneration Committee

12.224 Considered Document UC12/112 a report on the substantive items discussed at the Remuneration Committee meeting on 29th May 2013 and outlining the recommended Remuneration Philosophy for 2012/13.

- 12.225 Reported
- i. By the Chair of the Remuneration Committee that Court's consideration and approval of the Remuneration Philosophy was in line with the draft Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.
 - ii. The Remuneration Philosophy comprised consolidated pay and an element of performance related pay, and that this was in line with activities across the

sector as confirmed by an external advisor. Last year there had been a move to a four point appraisal scheme which had worked well and it was proposed to continue with this for 2012/13.

- iii. The Remuneration Committee had also considered the implications for some staff of changes in pension regulations and a report on this would be considered at the Committee's next meeting.

12.226 Discussed Confirmation was received that the concept of consolidated pay together with an element of performance related pay was acceptable not least because of its value in allowing prudent management of the paybill. The scheme had to be transparent and well managed with affordability being key. Further, the need for the Remuneration Philosophy to have due regard to current public policy should be included in the document.

12.227 Agreed To approve the Remuneration Philosophy subject to minor amendments, with the revised Philosophy being circulated to Members.

Finance and General Purposes Committee Report

12.228 Noted Document UC12/113 a report on the substantive items discussed at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on the 20th June 2013 which included the draft budget 2013/14 which had been submitted to this meeting for consideration and approval.

Audit Committee Report

12.229 Noted Document UC12/114 a report on the substantive items discussed at the Audit Committee at its meeting on 11th June 2013.

Court Membership Committee Report

12.230 Considered Document UC12/115 a report indicating that following the recent governor recruitment exercise, the Court Membership Committee wished to recommend the appointment of two potential governors. subject to the receipt of appropriate references and an up to date CV for one of the applicants.

12.231 Agreed To approve the appointment of the two governors subject to the receipt of appropriate references and an up to date CV for one of the applicants.

Secretary's Note: After the Court meeting one applicant withdrew.

Key Dates and Events

12.232 Noted Document UC12/116 detailing key dates and events.

Date of next meeting

12.233 Noted The next meeting of Court would be held on Thursday 19th September 2013 at 4.30pm.

Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair informed Court that this had been Ms Findlay's and Mr Scott's last meeting as Staff Governors. On behalf of Court, he thanked them both for their knowledgeable contribution to Court and its deliberations (which had been made in addition to their "day jobs") and wished them well for the future.