

University Court

Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 22nd September 2016

(Minutes 16.01 – 16.27)

Present: Mrs Hazel Brooke (Chair)
Mr John Chapman, Dr Morag Ferguson, Professor Pamela Gillies, Ms Laura Gordon, Mr Gordon Jack, Mr Ian Kerr, Mr Austin Lafferty, Ms Neena Mahal, Dr Neil Partlett, Professor Ann Priest, Ms Lauren Ramage, Miss Davena Rankin, Mr Paul Reynolds, Professor Stephanie Young (Vice-Chair)

Apologies: Dr Douglas Chalmers, Mr Tom Halpin, Mr Neil Partlett and Mr Alistair Webster

In attendance: Mr Kevin Campbell, Student Vice-President School of Health & Life Sciences
Ms Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal (Governance)
Mrs Claire Hulsen, Director of Strategy & Planning for item 15.149
Mr Alex Killick, Director of People
Professor Cam Donaldson, Acting Pro Vice Chancellor Research
Professor James Miller, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy)
Mr Gerry Milne, Chief Financial Officer & Vice-Principal Infrastructure
Professor Valerie Webster, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
Ms Julie Adair, Director of Digital Collaboration (for item 12)

Mr Riley Power, Governance Manager (Secretary)

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and in particular extended a welcome from Court to Professor Cam Donaldson, who was attending his first meeting of Court in the role of Acting PVC Research

Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 23rd June 2016

16.01 Agreed Document UC16/01, the unconfirmed draft minutes of the Court meeting held on 23rd June 2016 were an accurate record subject to reflecting that Mr Austin Lafferty had been in attendance at the meeting.

Matters Arising Briefing Note

16.02 Noted An oral update on the matters arising from the meeting held on 23rd June 2016. Specifically members noted an update in relation to the process for recruiting a Director of Marketing and Communication and the decision to review the requirement and specific action for the position in light of Executive Board portfolio changes. Members also noted an update from DVC Strategy on the digital strategy and noted in particular that a business case for a new student management system would be presented to Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 18 October 2016.

Chair's Report

16.03 Noted Document UC16/02, a report from the Chair of Court on the activities she had undertaken and meetings she had attended, on behalf of Court.

Principal's and Executive Board Report

16.04 Noted Document UC16/03, the Principal's and Executive Board Report to Court.

16.05 Reported

- i. In addition to the matters raised in the Principal's report, the Principal also reported to Court that the University had experienced a decline in international student numbers.
- ii. Court noted that the sector as a whole was facing a number of challenges within the international student market. Further discussion about the University's response to these challenges would be had at the Court Away Day. The response included the University's work in developing international recruitment hubs, expanding the number of TNE partnerships and using digital social marketing to attract international students to GCU.

University Secretary's Report

16.06 Considered Document UC16/04, the University Secretary's Report.

16.07 Agreed

- i. Court agreed to reaffirm the Court's Statement of Primary Responsibilities
- ii. Court approved the University statement on modern slavery which set out the steps the University had taken to ensure that its operations and supply chains were free from trafficking and slavery.

16.08 Noted

- i. Court received an update on the work of the University's Prevent Steering Group. In particular Court noted actions that had been taken following a previous gap analysis to ensure the University complied with its obligations under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- ii. The University Secretary invited the Vice-Chair of Court to provide an update to Court members following the appraisal of the Chair of Court's performance. Court members noted the very positive and constructive feedback provided by Governors and the Vice-Chair's subsequent discussions with the Chair of Court.

16.09 Agreed

- i. Court agreed to ratify the election of Professor Ann Priest to the Board of Directors of GCU NYC Inc following a proposal agreed by the GCU NYC Inc Board at its meeting on 26 November 2016 to appoint a further GCU lay governor to the Board.

16.10 Considered Court members commented on the draft calendar of Court and Committee meetings for 2017/2018 and the University Secretary agreed to issue a revised timetable for Court members.

Quality Assurance

- 16.11 Considered
- i. Document UC16/05 Annual Statement on Institution Led Review of Quality for the Academic Session 2015-16 and the Annual Statement of Assurance 2015-2016.
 - ii. Court discussed the report and the activity conducted at GCU as part of the annual quality assurance and enhancement cycle for Session 2015/16. This included:
 - Two Enhancement Led Internal Subject Reviews (ELISR)
 - Programme approval/re-approval activity
 - External Examiners reports
- 16.12 Agreed
- Court accepted the report and approved submission to the SFC of:
- The Annual Statement on Institution Led Review of Quality for the Academic Session 2015-16; and
 - The Annual Statement of Assurance 2015-2016

Review of GCU London

- 16.13 Considered
- i. Document UC16/06 being a report from the DVC Strategy on GCU London.
 - ii. Members noted the indications received of recovery despite an increasingly difficult environment. Court also received an update on progress of the actions approved by Court in March 2016 and the development of a revised business plan to 2020. Specifically, Members noted:
 - Student recruitment is ahead of 2015/16 for trimester A 2016/17 but required further action on attraction and conversion to achieve the target figure for the whole academic year;
 - The rent review was ongoing although all parties seemed keen to reach a negotiated settlement;
 - The revised business plan would be to refocus the GCU London offer from GCU London to those niche areas that had underpinned the original business model and develop new delivery mechanisms, such as through distance learning.
 - The revised pricing and scholarship approach which reflected the competitive landscape;
 - That work to achieve closer integration and re-establish economies of scale with the professional services based in Glasgow;
 - Where appropriate, changes to the staff profiles would facilitate the achievement of the initial action plan.
 - iii. Members noted that the actions being proposed as part of the revised business plan would be evidence-based and aligned with the niche offering at GCU London. The revised plan for submission to the Court in February 2017 would be supported by new market research.
- 16.14 Agreed
- i. That further analysis be undertaken, and that, based on the evidence, a revised business plan be created for GCUL covering the period up to the completion of the current strategic planning cycle of 2020. The revised business plan would be presented to Court at its meeting in February 2017.
- The development of the revised business case would include:
- Updated market intelligence
 - Further development of synergies with other University services

- Opportunities for expansion of doctoral student opportunities
 - Expansion of the delivery modes
 - Review of staff and non-staff costs
 - Diversification of income
 - Options appraisal for location
- ii. Court agreed that an interim update on the development of the updated business plan would be provided to the Court at its meeting in November 2016.

National Student Survey 2016 Results

- 16.15 Noted
- i. Document UC16/07, a report from the DVC (Academic) in relation to the University's results in the National Student Survey 2016.
- ii. Court noted the headline results from the survey.
- iii. Court noted that the University had undertaken an in-depth analysis of the results and was working closely with the Student Association to develop a better and more comprehensive understanding of the student experience and the drivers of positive and negative student experiences. The work undertaken to date had identified the need for a more coordinated and consistent approach to organisational management of programmes and assessment feedback.
- iv. Court noted that further proposals for addressing the matters highlighted by the results would be provided to the University Senate for further consideration and that an overview of the Student Experience action plan would be presented to the Court Away Day in October 2016.

Key issues from the Stern review of the Research Excellence Framework published in July 2016

- 16.16 Considered
- i. Document UC16/08, a report from the PVC Research outlining the key recommendations of the Stern Review of the Research Excellence Framework published in July 2016.
- ii. Court noted in particular the recommendation that all research active staff should be submitted to the REF. The University was currently modelling the impact on the University's 2015 REF scores if this recommendation were adopted. Court noted that the results of this analysis would be taken into account in the University's research strategy that would be submitted to the Senate in December 2016 and to Court in February 2017.

Outcome Agreement 2017/2018: Guidance & Approach

- 16.17 Noted
- i. Court noted an update from the Director of Strategy and Planning in relation to the delayed SFC letter of guidance for the outcome agreement 2017/18. Members noted that the guidance was due to be published in July. However publication had been delayed until September. The guidance would take account of the Ministerial Letter from the Cabinet Secretary to the SFC of 29 September 2016, and was expected to place new duties on universities following the report by the Government's Commission on Widening Access and the SFC Gender Action Plan.
- ii. Court was advised the draft Outcome Agreement 2017/18 would be provided to Court at its meeting in November 2016.

Presentation from Julie Adair: Common Good First

- 16.18 Noted
- i. Court received a presentation from Julie Adair, Director of Digital Collaboration, on the Common Good First Platform. The platform was designed to facilitate the digital exchange of grassroots solutions to pressing social issues in the UK and globally, to engage academic review and to promote, where feasible, scaled up solutions to deliver widespread change. Court noted in particular that the project had been successful in securing a substantial Erasmus+ EU grant of nearly €2M to develop and expand the Common Good First platform.
 - ii. The Chaired thanked Julie Adair on behalf of the Court for the informative and encouraging presentation.

GCU New York Update

- 16.19 Noted
- i. Document UC16/09 a progress report on recent activity at GCUNY including areas of revenue and income generation and sponsorship.
 - ii. The Principal provided an update on progress with the licence application as well as an update on the work of the Fair Fashion Centre. Court noted that the University was seeking to establish an agreed timeline with NYSED. Court noted the importance of ensuring that a financially sustainable business model was adopted by GCU NY and that further discussions in relation to GCU NY would be held at the Court Away Days in October 2016 and the November 2016 meeting of Court.

Standing Committee Business

- 16.20 Noted
- Document UC16/10, the Standing Committee Annual Reports 2015-2016, Objectives and Terms of Reference 2016/2017.
- 16.21 Agreed
- i. To approve the Standing Committee objectives for 2016-2017 which were set out in the respective annual reports for each Committee.
 - ii. To approve the addition of the following to the terms of reference of the Court Membership Committee and the Remuneration Committee:
 - 'To ensure that decision making is consistent with the duties of the Equality Act 2010;'
 - iii. To approve that the reference to the Chief Information Officer in point 1 of the Remuneration Committee terms of reference was replaced with the phrase "any other post holder at a comparable level of seniority".
 - iv. To approve the removal of references in the Audit Committee terms of reference to providing the Court with advice on compliance with the SFC outcome agreement (para 1.iv) and replacing the reference to 'Head of Financial Accounting' in the Composition with 'Financial Controller' (para 6.i).
- 16.22 Considered
- i. Document UC16/11 Staff Policy Committee: Staff Resourcing and Recruitment Policy.

- ii. The Director of People highlighted the key features of the new Staff Resourcing and Recruitment Policy which was intended to replace existing policies on Recruitment & Selection and Fixed Term Employment, and to provide a policy framework for guidance on new procedures. Court noted that discussions were also underway with procurement to review procedures for engaging individuals through contracts for service following procurement regulation changes in April 2016. Court noted that earlier drafts of the policy had been considered by the Staff Policy Committee on 8 June 2016, and by the Joint Consultative Committee on 9 September 2016.

16.23	Agreed	To approve the Staff Resourcing and Recruitment Policy.
16.24	Considered	Document UC16/12, a report from the Court Membership Committee which proposed changes to the membership of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Health and Safety Committee.
16.25	Agreed	<p>Court agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Appoint Ann Priest and Paul Reynolds to the Finance and General Purposes Committee ii. Appoint John Chapman as Chair of the Health and Safety Committee iii. Appoint Neena Mahal to the Health and Safety Committee

Annual Renewal of Bank of Scotland Mandate and Facility Letter

16.26	Considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Document UC16/13, Bank of Scotland Mandate and Facility Letter. ii. The CFO and VP Infrastructure invited Court to approve the renewal of the Bank of Scotland Mandate and Facility Letter and noted that the terms and facilities remained unchanged from those approved in September 2015. The Mandate and Facility Letter was also approved by the Board of Directors of GCUC Ltd and GCU Academy Ltd at meetings held on 22 September 2016.
16.27	Agreed	Court approved the renewal of the Bank of Scotland Mandate and Facility Letter.

Date of next meeting

16.28	Noted	The next meeting of Court would be held on Thursday 24 th November 2016 at 2.00pm.
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