Court

Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 12 October 2011 in the Senate Room

Present:

Mr David Anderson General Council Member, Ms Susan Ashworth Employee Representative, Mr Ken Brown Co-opted Member, Mr Peter Daniels Co-opted Member, Ms Susan Dunsme General Council Member, Dr Robin Easton Co-opted Member, Professor Eleanor Gordon Senate Member, Dr Gordon Hay Senate Member, Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP Rector (Chair), Mr Alan Macfarlane General Council Member, Cllr Jim Mackechnie Glasgow City Council Representative, Mr Murdoch MacLennan Chancellor’s Representative, Professor William Martin Senate Member, Mr Matt Morrison SRC Member on Court, Ms Margaret Morton Co-opted Member, Professor Anton Muscatelli Principal, Dr Alan Owen Senate Member, Mr Stuart Ritchie SRC President, Mr Alex Ross Employee Representative, Mr David Ross General Council Member (Convener of Court), Professor Michael Scott-Morton Co-opted Member, Professor Adrienne Scullion Senate Member, Mr Kevin Sweeney General Council Member

In attendance:

Mr Ian Black (Director of Human Resources), Professor Steve Beaumont (Vice-Principal Research & Enterprise), Professor Graham Caie (Clerk of Senate and Vice-Principal), Professor John Chapman (Head of College of Science & Engineering and Vice-Principal), Professor Frank Coton (Vice-Principal Learning & Teaching), Professor Anna Dominiczak (Head of College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences and Vice-Principal), Mr Robert Fraser (Director of Finance), Professor Neal Juster (Vice-Principal Strategy & Resources), Mr Jim McConnell (Director of Estates & Buildings), Ms Deborah Maddern (Administrative Officer), Mr David Newall (Secretary of Court), Professor Andrea Nolan (Senior Vice-Principal), Professor Murray Pittock (Head of College of Arts and Vice-Principal)

Apologies:

Attenders: Professor Anne Anderson (Head of College of Social Sciences and Vice-Principal), Ms Susan Stewart (Director of Corporate Communications)

CRT/2011/1. Announcements

Matt Morrison was attending his final meeting. Court thanked him for his contributions to its business and wished him well in the future.

CRT/2011/2. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22 June 2011

The minutes were approved.

CRT/2011/3. Matters Arising

With reference to minutes CRT/2010/37.3. and CRT/2010/48 Student Occupation – Independent Investigation, Court noted that the investigation was complete and endorsed the Convener’s thanks to the panel for their work and for the report. The recommendations on
actions to be taken by the University were being taken forward.

With reference to minute CRT/2010/50.4, Consultation Outcomes (Nursing and Health Care), Court noted that with respect to clarity being given to the School about what would be required in terms of expected levels of successful research, a group was being convened by the Head of the School of Medicine to look at this and other areas requiring consideration following the consultation’s conclusion.

Court heard that Mrs Joy Travers was stepping down as a member of the Remuneration Committee. Court recorded its thanks to her for serving on the Committee.

Court noted that the Convener would be compiling a summary report on the main topics discussed at Court, for sharing with the wider University community following each meeting.

**CRT/2011/4. Report from the Principal**

*CRT/2011/4.1 Scottish Government Budget and Spending Review*

The Scottish Government’s 2012-13 budget and planned allocations for the remainder of the Spending Review period (2013-14 & 2014-15) had recently been announced. The ministerial letter of guidance to SFC had been provided to SFC and Universities Scotland members alongside the draft budget bill. The draft budget indicated a prioritisation of funding for Higher Education within public spending and within SFC’s detailed budget lines. There would be a funding increase of £76m in 2012-13. Subsequent planned allocations would see funding increase by a total of £135.5m by the final year of the Spending Review period. The cumulative overall additional planned investment in universities would total £326.8m over three years.

The Principal commented that the settlement for the Higher Education sector had been better than anticipated, albeit that the percentage increases year on year needed to be seen in the context of the baseline having previously been cut. However, it did need to be acknowledged that the sector had done well in the context of a very tight government budget. The letter of guidance contained a number of conditions, relating to areas including Widening Participation and retention, and also research, where it was not yet fully clear what the consequences of the government’s focus on greater concentration of research would be. Further details would emerge in the indicative and final grant letters from the SFC, which were expected later in the session. The Principal expressed his thanks to colleagues who had been involved in discussions with the government about funding for Higher Education.

In response to a question about the cut to the capital budget, Court noted that it would be important for the University to maintain healthy revenue surpluses in order fully to maintain the capital programme.

*CRT/2011/4.2 Review of Restructuring*

The plan for restructuring had included a commitment to review its success after the first year of operation, as well as after 3 and 5 years. In the coming months, SMG would be considering the first year assessment, which would include input from staff surveys and a report from the College Secretaries reviewing and developing administrative support structures across the Colleges and Schools. Court would receive a further update later in the year.

*CRT/2011/4.3 Consultation Outcomes - Update*

In June, Court had received the reports and recommendations of the consultations undertaken in the spring of 2011. In a number of the areas which had been the subject of consultation, actions
had been taken over the summer in line with recommendations in the reports. These included the establishment of the working group referred to earlier in relation to Nursing, and development of a business plan relating to the Open Programme. Court would be updated on this work in December.

**CRT/2011/4.4 National Student Survey/University Rankings**

Court noted that the University had again achieved excellent results in the National Student Survey. Court also noted the University’s strong performance in the latest QS World University, Sunday Times Good University Guide and Times Higher Education (THE) rankings.

**CRT/2011/4.5 Student Admissions**

Court noted data from the 2011 applications and admissions cycles. As an average across the University, Undergraduate applications had shown a 7% year on year reduction. This reduction had been anticipated, following the University's decision to raise its entry tariffs. Postgraduate applications (Teaching and Research) had grown by 21%, with the major growth area continuing to be Social Sciences, and in particular the Business School, where applications had increased by 29%. The latter was the subject of careful monitoring by relevant management to ensure that quality of provision and infrastructure was maintained.

**CRT/2011/4.6 Key Activities**

Court noted a summary of some of the main activities in which the Principal had been involved since the last meeting of Court, covering internal and external activities beyond daily operational management and strategy meetings. The activities were under the broad headings of: Events/Alumni/Fundraising/Internal activities; Lobbying/Profile Raising/Politician and VIP visits; Academic Development; and Internationalisation activities.

**CRT/2011/5. Report from the Secretary of Court**

**CRT/2011/5.1 Court Strategy Discussion Day**

Court noted a report of the Strategy Discussion Day, which included Court’s approval of the proposed Fees structure for RUK students.

**CRT/2011/5.2 Voluntary Severance Scheme**

Court noted that the Voluntary Severance Scheme had successfully helped the University address the need for cost-reduction in recent months. 250 individuals had accepted offers of severance. The scheme had achieved net recurrent savings of £10.3M and the University was now in a better position to meet the financial challenges it would face over the next few years. Given the savings achieved and to allow any final applications to be made, Court approved the scheme being kept open until 16 December.

Court agreed that there may be a future need for the University to offer voluntary severance arrangements, particularly in light of its continuing commitment to reduce costs in certain areas. As a result, the Remuneration Committee would consider the University's future policy on severance arrangements and report on this to the next meeting of Court.

**CRT/2011/5.3 Slavonic Studies**
In June, had Court approved the recommendations of the School of Modern Languages & Cultures consultation panel, subject to the comments of SMG. These had included a recommendation that September 2011 would be the last year that student cohorts would be admitted to the degree programme in Slavonic Studies.

Since the meeting in June, two members of academic staff in the Law School had argued that Court's decision to withdraw the Slavonic Studies degree programme, contrary to Senate's expressed view, was ultra vires. The Secretary of Court’s response on Court’s behalf, which had been supported by the opinion of the University’s lawyers, was that Court had acted within its powers. Court had received details of the exchange of views between the Secretary and those academic staff.

The Clerk of Senate advised Court that there were strong feelings among members of Senate about what was seen as an academic decision - namely the discontinuation of Slavonic Studies - being taken by Court without the support of Senate. The Clerk of Senate added that it was vital for Court to maintain good relations with Senate, for good communication to exist and for politeness and diplomacy to prevail.

Court noted that the area of communications was being addressed through a Senate Working Group, which had (via the Communications from Senate paper) provided details of its interim report to the present Court meeting. The interim report contained recommendations relating to better engagement between the two bodies.

Court heard a concern from the SRC President about the strength of feeling in Senate regarding the respective powers and roles of Court and Senate. Court heard the view of a number of Senate Members on Court that there was a distinction between changes to degree programmes that arose from academic units’ decisions, which might not in fact be considered by Senate before implementation, and what had been considered by many in Senate as a ‘top down’ decision in the case of Slavonic Studies. Court heard comments from other members of Court that legal advice had been obtained and should be followed, and that Court’s role as governing body was to act in the long term interests of the University; it had made a decision about the future of Slavonic Studies in this context.

Court noted the arguments presented by the two members of academic staff and the response that had been sent by the Secretary of Court with the advice of the University's lawyer. Court also noted that, given the nature of the University’s constitution, which included provisions in several Acts of Parliament, different interpretations of Court’s powers were possible. Court agreed that it was clear that it had an overall governing and strategic role, which included making decisions such as this one, about the long term and best interests of the University. It had exercised this role in coming to the decision in June.

Finally Court noted that the arguments made by the Secretary of Court, supported by the opinion of the University’s lawyers, that it was within its powers to decide to withdraw Slavonic Studies and concluded that as a result that decision remained in effect.

While agreeing that it was a separate matter from that of its decision about Slavonic Studies, Court stressed that it was concerned to improve communications between Court and Senate and that it would welcome the broader issues discussed at the present meeting, about the roles of Court and Senate, also being discussed at the Working Group’s meetings and subsequently set out at Senate. This matter would be taken forward by the Convener of Court and the Secretary of Court who, with the Principal, would be attending a forthcoming meeting with the Working Group.

**ACTION DR/DN**

**CRT/2011/5.4 Review of HE Governance**

Over the summer, Court members had been contacted to invite their input to the University's submission to the Scottish Government's Review of Higher Education Governance. A report
had subsequently been sent to the Review team, and shared with Court members. Court would be kept updated on the outcome of the Review, which was expected at the end of 2011.

**CRT/2011/5.5 Ordinance on Composition of Court**

The Privy Council had provided interim feedback on the Ordinance. It had suggested that changes to the lay membership could proceed but that the number of Senate Assessors on Court should remain unchanged at this stage, to be revisited by the University after further consultation with Senate and after the HE Governance Review report. Court agreed that rather than seek partially to implement the draft Ordinance, the outcome of the Governance Review should be awaited before taking further action.

Court noted that the election of 2 new Senate Assessors to Court was in progress.

**CRT/2011/5.6 Redundancy Committee Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division (GUARD)**

At its last meeting, Court had approved a recommendation that a member of technical staff from GUARD be made redundant if, at the end of the 6 month period, it had not been possible to redeploy her, following a period of employment relating to archive and treasure trove activities. Discussions about further mitigation and avoidance had continued over the summer, leading to an agreed severance package, within the terms of the University's voluntary severance scheme. Court noted that the work of the Redundancy and Structural Change Committees was now complete.

**CRT/2011/5.7 Committee appointments**

The Remuneration Committee had agreed that it wished to strengthen its membership with the addition of a further lay member. The Nominations Committee had agreed to recommend to Court that Ken Brown, co-opted member of Court, be appointed to the Remuneration Committee. Court approved the increase in membership and the recommendation.

Earlier in the year, an advertisement had been placed in the press for 2 Co-opted Committee members, for the Finance Committee and Human Resources Committee. A Finance Committee appointment had since been approved by Court. Court noted that following interviews, no recommended appointment would be made to Court for the HR Committee.

In June, Court had approved the Pension Scheme Trustees taking forward the recruitment of a suitably qualified independent Chair, to replace David Anderson. Interviews with suitably qualified candidates were being held on 14/18 October. Court agreed that an appointment could be made immediately following this selection process.

**CRT/2011/5.8 Student Lifecycle Project/MyCampus**

The University had recently launched ‘MyCampus’, the University’s new student information system, and the Registration and Enrolment functions had been opened to new and continuing students in August.

Court noted a report on the implementation, as at 30 September. In the weeks since the new system was introduced, many staff and students had experienced considerable difficulties with Class Enrolment, which had been consuming much more staff time than had been estimated. The main reasons appeared to be: lack of familiarity with the system on the part of staff and students; some poor configuration of the software; some inconsistent or incomplete course information due to gaps or errors in the input of data; a high level of manual intervention required to override standard rules; and many students having a 'hold' placed on their record,
with much manual intervention required. There were deficiencies associated with training, software configuration, data input, and the set up of programme and course information, that needed to be addressed in order to avoid a repeat of the difficulties. The report identified the need to learn lessons from the experience of recent weeks and ensure that student system would operate more satisfactorily in the summer of 2012. The report expressed regret that the issues outlined had caused frustrations for students and had added to the workload of many staff.

Court asked that its appreciation be recorded of the work of the many staff who had sought to overcome the difficulties presented by the implementation of MyCampus. It was essential to ensure that lessons were learned from the experience of 2011, and Court was pleased to hear that the Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) had agreed to convene a Panel to examine lessons learned.

**CRT/2011/5.9 Western Infirmary Site**

Court would be updated at its next meeting on the matter of the possible acquisition of site B, or, if a decision was required in advance of that, through email correspondence.

**CRT/2011/5.10 Court Business 2011/12**

Standing Orders for Court had been provided for reference, and included details of Court committee dates and memberships for the coming session. The Statement of Primary Responsibilities, the Scheme of Delegated Authorities and the Schedule of Court Business for the coming year had had also been provided for reference.

**CRT/2011/5.11 Resolutions**

Court noted that on the recommendation of the Senate, the Secretary of Court had agreed the following Resolutions, which had been drafted following comments from the Senate and General Council. A copy of the Resolutions was available from the Court Office.

617 CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT
618 DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF ENGINEERING IN OPTICS AND PHOTONICS TECHNOLOGIES
619 DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF CLINICAL DENTISTRY (ORTHODONTICS)
620 DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE (DENTAL SCIENCE) FIXED AND REMOVEABLE PROSTHODONTICS & MASTER OF SCIENCE (DENTAL SCIENCE) ORAL AND MAXILOFACIAL SURGERY
632 DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
633 DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION
634 DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

**CRT/2011/5.12 Information about Media Coverage**

Future reports to Court would contain a summary of media coverage of the University.

**CRT/2011/6. Learning and Teaching Strategy**

Professor Frank Coton updated Court on the Learning and Teaching Strategy, including performance against Key Performance Indicators.
The University was continuing to focus its strategic objectives on three areas relating to Learning and Teaching:

i) **Shaping the University Learning Community**, where key areas included: offering a culturally diverse learning environment, preparing students for local and global employment and citizenship, enhancing the University’s position as a leading postgraduate university through further development and expansion of the portfolio of programmes, and attracting the most talented students, irrespective of their background.

ii) **Excelling in Learning and Teaching**, where key areas included: ensuring that staff had excellent skills in teaching, in motivating and supporting student learning, with opportunities to develop, within a culture of rewarding excellence; continually developing assessment and feedback methods; and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching, and upholding academic standards, while streamlining wherever possible the associated administrative processes.

iii) **Delivering an Excellent Student Experience**, where key areas included: continuing to build on the strong student-staff partnership to promote student engagement with learning and enhance student success; ensuring that a core part of the student experience involved opportunities for the development of attributes that enhanced personal and professional development in preparation for global employment and citizenship, an aspect linked to the Internationalisation Strategy; and continually improving the physical and virtual learning space.

Court noted that the strategic objectives encompassed a wide range of activity within the University. However, there were areas of current priority in the short term, where particular emphasis was being placed. These areas included student retention, Assessment and Feedback and Graduate Attribute development.

Court noted Key Performance Indicators relating to the Learning and Teaching and a number of highlights within the individual KPIs. There were some challenges, the main ones relating to sustainable PG growth and the need for continuous innovation.

An action plan that encompassed the outputs of working groups, the ELIR action plan, actions arising from internal audits and key priority actions in Learning and Teaching had been developed. The plan had been structured as a series of projects that addressed specific facets of the revised Learning and Teaching strategy. Progress against the plan was being monitored by the University Learning and Teaching Committee. Senate and Court would receive annual progress reports.

Court thanked Professor Coton for the update.

**CRT/2011/7. Reports of Court Committees**

**CRT/2011/7.1 Finance Committee**

**CRT/2011/7.1.1 Singapore – Phase 2**

Court noted the progress relating to the collaborative agreement between the University and the Singapore Institute of Technology, relating to the provision of jointly taught undergraduate programmes of the BEng in Mechanical Design Engineering and the BEng in Mechatronics. A proposed expansion of teaching provision under the collaboration agreement, to include jointly taught undergraduate programmes of the BEng Aerospace Engineering and BEng Aerospace Systems, had been supported by the Finance Committee.
CRT/2011/7.1.2 Endowments Investment Report
Court noted the Endowment Investment Report as at 31 July 2011.

CRT/2011/7.2 Audit Committee
Court noted the report of the Audit Committee.

CRT/2011/7.3 Human Resources Committee
Court noted the report of the Human Resources Committee. Ian Black updated Court on possible industrial action. The UCU had asked its members to work to contract from 17 October. Staff had received a letter from the University indicating that the institution would welcome a continuing professional approach from staff in fulfilling all aspects of their contracts and with a reminder about the University’s policy on partial performance. Court noted the SRC’s position, which was supportive of staff concerns about pensions but not in favour of action that would affect students adversely.

CRT/2011/7.4 Estates Committee
Court noted the Estates Committee’s approval in principle of the proposed Stevenson Building Extension, subject to satisfactory plans being developed to address Glasgow University Union’s needs for a suitable social facility to replace the Hive extension. Peter Daniels added that the Estates Committee’s decision was very clear on this in terms of the condition about measures needing to be in place for a social facility. Court noted that a more detailed report and proposals would be available at the next meeting. The Secretary reported that University officials were in ongoing discussion on this matter with officials of the GUU.

CRT/2011/7.5 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee

CRT/2011/7.5.1 Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) Guidelines
Court authorised the PAT guidelines being sent to School/Institute/Department managers.

CRT/2011/7.5.2 Terms of Reference
Court approved the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee’s Terms of Reference, subject to the inclusion of a reference to the Committee’s regular liaison with SMG on matters requiring its attention.

CRT/2011/7.5.3 Health Surveillance Policy
Court approved the Health Surveillance Policy.

The Rector referred to the earlier reference to the Hetherington Inquiry, which he had chaired.

**CRT/2011/9. Communications from meeting of Senate 6 October 2011**

The Clerk of Senate advised Court of the honorary degree nominations, on a confidential basis. Members of Court could contact the Clerk of Senate if they had observations to make.

Court noted that Senate had received an interim report from the Communications Working Group, details of which had been included in the paper to Court. The interim report had included recommendations, which Senate had approved, some concerning Court. Court agreed that the recommendations needed to be looked at in more detail and that members would email the Convener by 20 October with any comments that they wished to be included in feedback to Senate. Court noted that the recommendations included Court and Senate each being briefed on the workings of the other body, which it welcomed.

Court noted the other Communications from Senate, including a summary of the Senate discussion on MyCampus and details of revisions by Senate to the draft Ordinances relating to Senate membership.


Court had received a copy of the University’s draft annual report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on progress with institution-led reviews during 2010-11. The contents were specified by the SFC, and summarised review activity undertaken by the University of its provision for students, namely reviews of Periodic Subject Reviews, Graduate Schools and Administrative Review Process exercises carried out in respect of student-facing University services. Information concerning review activity carried out at the University by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies was also included.

Court approved the report to the SFC.

**CRT/2011/11. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**CRT/2011/12. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Court will be held on Wednesday 14 December 2011 in the Senate Room

*Prepared by Deborah Maddern Clerk to Committee deborah.maddern@glasgow.ac.uk*