Court

Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 14 December 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 Dunsmore General Council Member, Dr Robin Easton Co-opted Member, Professor Eleanor Gordon Senate Member, Dr Gordon Hay Senate Member, Ms Amy Johnson SRC Vice President Student Support, Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP Rector (Chair), Mr Kenneth Law SRC Member on Court, Mr Alan Macfarlane General Council Member, Cllr Jim Mackechnie Glasgow City Council Representative, Professor William Martin Senate Member, Ms Margaret Morton Co-opted Member, Professor Anton Muscatelli Principal, Dr Alan Owen Senate Member, Professor Miles Padgett Senate Member, Mr Alex Ross Employee Representative, Mr David Ross General Council Member (Convener of Court), Professor Adrienne Scullion Senate Member, Dr Donald Spaeth Senate 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), Ms Susan Stewart (Director of Corporate Communications)

Apologies:

Members: Mr Murdoch MacLennan Chancellor’s Representative, Professor Michael Scott-Morton Co-opted Member, Mr Kevin Sweeney General Council Member

Attenders: Professor Anne Anderson (Head of College of Social Sciences and Vice-Principal)

CRT/2011/13. Announcements

Court welcomed Professor Miles Padgett, Dr Donald Spaeth, Ms Amy Johnson and Mr Kenneth Law to their first meeting of Court.

Jim McConnell was attending his final meeting. Members of Court thanked him for his contributions to Court and wished him well in the future.
CRT/2011/14. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 October 2011

The minutes were approved.

CRT/2011/15. Matters Arising

With reference to minute CRT/2011/5.3 Slavonic Studies, Mr Newall reminded Court that at the last meeting it had been reported that 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, had been *ultra vires*. The Secretary of Court's response on Court’s behalf, which had been supported by the opinion of the University’s lawyers, had been that Court had acted within its powers. The academic staff had since had the opportunity to meet directly with the University's lawyers and discuss the basis of their advice. In recent days, three members of Senate had obtained a separate legal opinion which challenged that of the University lawyers. This opinion would be shared with the University lawyers, who would be asked for a written response. The details would be shared with Court members.

**ACTION DN**

CRT/2011/16. Report from the Principal

**CRT/2011/16.1 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. At its November meeting, SMG had considered the first year assessment.

The Senior Vice Principal, Professor Andrea Nolan, presented the review report to Court.

The main objectives of the restructuring had been: to improve research performance, by facilitating collaboration, multi-disciplinarity and joint working, and improving communication to stimulate creativity; to enhance the Postgraduate research student environment; to support strategies to improve student success, and build on the high quality student experience; and to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in both the academic units and administrative support.

The restructuring had taken place in a short timespan and during a period of intense activity in other areas, including Cost Reduction and VSER, Academic Shape and consultations, the Student Lifecycle Project/MyCampus and the Mini REF.

Success criteria for the first year had been agreed as the establishment of functioning Colleges and academically coherent Schools; the establishment of functioning Research Institutes and Graduate Schools; and the sustainability of student satisfaction measures, including the National Student Survey and the International Student Barometer. These criteria had to a large extent been achieved: no major problems had arisen in research and teaching, with student satisfaction good and students being well supported. However, a more fine-grained study of the outcomes of the review, which had included a staff survey, input from managers, and a review of support structures by the College Secretaries, had revealed that there were a number of areas where feedback has not been positive and where further action was needed. While it was generally accepted that the College/School/Research Institute structure was logical and that leaders had ‘bought in’ to objectives, there were significant areas requiring attention. The decision making process was not well regarded, with criticisms about the contact points for decision making being unclear, a low percentage of staff feeling they were consulted or engaged in decision making, and such processes appearing to have become more complex and remote, with a perception that decision making was now higher up in the University management structure. There were also some problems relating to administrative support and functions. Recommendations arising from the review were focused on promoting the improvements delivered already, implementing a leadership development programme, training
and support for staff leading and managing change, developing and implementing an internal communications strategy, and reviewing support staff structure/resource requirements.

It had been acknowledged as an outcome of the review that it had been a challenging and difficult year for staff, who had had to cope with a large amount of change. SMG would be considering the impact of developments and initiatives on staff.

An action plan would be developed in early 2012. Court would receive a further update at its February meeting.

Court thanked Professor Nolan for the report, acknowledging that much had been achieved in a short timescale and in the context of other significant initiatives having been going on in parallel. Court also acknowledged that there were areas that still needed to be addressed. A particular concern was raised about the staff survey feedback on improvements to the decision making process and on communication above local level, both of which areas had been rated poorly.

Court asked that a summary of the review, and ongoing progress, be made available on the University website. More detailed statistics of the staff survey responses were requested to be provided to Court members.

**ACTION AN**

**CRT/2011/16.2 Senate Communications Working Group**

David Ross, David Newall and the Principal had attended a meeting of the Senate Communications Working Group held on 28 October. One of the items of business had been the Senate and Court relationship, and also the relationship with the SMG. Much discussion had been given to the need to specify and promote better understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of these bodies, and to establish agreed arrangements to deal with matters of joint interest. A document would be produced in the form of a practical guide.

**CRT/2011/16.3 University Budget**

At the Court Strategy Day, the funding position for the University had not been clear. The Scottish Government's announcement of an additional £135.5M for the sector over the period of the spending review had been very positive news. It had been well above the anticipated settlement before the election. In addition, the University’s Voluntary Severance Scheme had reduced costs more than expected, and for the third year in a row the University had grown its income from international recruitment, in line with University strategy. Measures to reduce costs and grow income had placed the University on a strong financial footing for the next 3 years. The University would be able to make a substantial investment to support its teaching and research.

**CRT/2011/16.5 Glasgow University Guardian**

Court noted that the Principal had taken the opportunity of his recent open meeting with students to point out to the author of a recent article in the Glasgow University Guardian that the claim made by that author, that the Principal has applied for a post at LSE, was untrue.

**CRT/2011/16.5 International Student Barometer**

The University had been ranked first in the UK for international student satisfaction in the Summer Wave of the ISB. Although the response rate was lower than that from the NSS survey, the sample had been sufficiently large to make the survey representative.
CRT/2011/16.6 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: Internal activities and Communications; Academic Development and Strategy; Internationalisation activities; Lobbying/Policy Influencing and Promoting the University.

CRT/2011/17. Report from the Secretary of Court

CRT/2011/17.1 Stevenson Building Extension/Glasgow University Union

At its last meeting, Court had noted 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. Since the October meeting, University officials had been in discussion with officials of the GUU, and with a firm of Architects, who had developed outline proposals for the Stevenson extension and for associated works to improve GUU’s accommodation.

Court had heard further details at the pre-Court briefing on 14 December. A formal proposal would be made through Estates and Finance Committees.

CRT/2011/17.2 Western Infirmary Site

A Project Board had been established to oversee the development of the Western Infirmary Site. The Board was reviewing the University's Estates Strategy, having particular regard to the opportunities provided by the Western Infirmary site to further the University's strategic objectives. As part of this process, a consultation exercise would be launched with staff and students in early February. The Board intended to submit the revised Estates strategy to Estates Committee, and then Court, in September/October 2012.

Discussions were continuing with the Health Board over the University's possible acquisition of Western Infirmary Site B (the 4-acre site adjacent to Church Street). A Court working group had overseen the acquisition of Western Site A, and that same group was overseeing the University's negotiations with the Health Board.

CRT/2011/17.3 Student Lifecycle Project/MyCampus

At its October meeting, Court had received a report on the problems encountered during the introduction of the MyCampus system and the steps taken to address these. Since October, action had been taken forward in three areas:

1. Short-term priorities.

In recent weeks, much of the work of the Project Team and of colleagues in Schools had been focused on addressing short-term priorities. These included ensuring that undergraduates were fully enrolled for their courses and exams, running the exam timetable, testing the system for recording exam marks, and resolving difficulties that some students had experienced with financial aspects of registration.

The system was only now about to implement direct debit charges, mainly for accommodation costs, with effect from 16 December, there having been a delay in implementing these. Any students who failed to meet the first charge because of insufficient funds would be treated sympathetically.
.2 Implementation Plans

The Project Board had reviewed the implementation plan for MyCampus. The implementation of Registration and Enrolment in August 2012 had been by far the largest event in the implementation programme. However, there were further areas in which MyCampus functionality was still to be introduced. The Board had agreed in October that any new developments with a substantial effect on the workload of staff in Schools should be introduced only once there was a high level of confidence with the new software, and following a thorough training programme. This had led to the Board agreeing that it would delay until 2012/13 the implementation of new admissions functionality for non-UCAS applicants, and that it would delay for the foreseeable future functionality that allowed the recording of continuous assessment.

.3 Lessons Learned

Following the experience of Registration and Enrolment in August/September 2011, Professor Frank Coton had convened a Lessons Learned group. The group had consulted extensively with the users of the MyCampus system and had prepared a report for the Project Board. The aim of the Lessons Learned group had been to ensure that the Registration and Enrolment process would run a great deal more efficiently in 2012, and the group had identified a series of issues that required to be addressed in order to achieve this. The group’s report had been considered by the Project Board, and it had been agreed that, for each of the issues identified, action could be taken in the coming months to address the main concerns. The Board was now reviewing the Project Plan to determine when and by whom each of the required actions would be addressed and to ensure that sufficient resource was provided for this.

Professor Coton and the group were thanked by Court for their work.

Court noted a comment from Dr Spaeth that improved user experience of the system needed to be a higher priority, as confidence had been very badly hit. Court heard from Professor Coton that a key finding of the group had related to usability and user interface with the system, and that, more widely, it would be very important for the University community to be involved in future projects to ensure optimal delivery. The lessons learned would be applied to future projects in general, not just those involving IT. SMG and the SLP project board would be having further discussions in the coming months; Court would receive further details.

CRT/2011/17.4 Court Agenda

Since December, the Court agenda had been placed online for the University community, ahead of the relevant Court meeting. This reflected discussions at the Senate Working Group where the subject of Court/Senate communications had been considered.

Court approved its agenda papers being made available after each meeting of Court, subject to the Court Office reviewing the papers to ensure that any commercially sensitive matters were excluded from publication.

CRT/2011/17.5 Convener of Court

David Ross left the meeting for this item.

Court approved the Secretary of Court advising the Secretary to the General Council that, in order to complete his proposed current term as Convener, Court would be pleased for David Ross to serve on Court for a third term as a General Council Assessor, should he be re-elected by the General Council.
CRT/2011/17.6 Media Coverage
Court noted a summary of recent media coverage of the University, and thanked Susan Stewart and her team for the report. Court agreed that it would welcome a briefing on the Communications Strategy, in early 2012.

CRT/2011/17.7 Open Programme
At its June 2011 meeting, Court had endorsed the recommendation of the consultation panel that the University should continue to provide courses through the Open Programme, but that a robust business model should be established. The business model for the programme was currently under review, and the outcome would be reported to Court in February 2012.

Court noted that an update on the Nursing and Health Care consultation follow-up would be given later in 2011/12.

CRT/2011/17.8 Employee Representative on Court
In October, Susan Ashworth had been re-nominated by the Joint Union Liaison Committee to serve on Court as Employee Representative for a further 2 years. No other employee nominations had been received during the nomination period and therefore Ms Ashworth had been re-appointed to Court for 2 years from 8 January 2012.

CRT/2011/17.9 Senate Assessors on Court
Professor Miles Padgett had been elected to Court, to the professorial Science & Engineering vacancy, for 4 years.
Dr Donald Spaeth had been elected to Court, to the non-professorial Arts/MVLS vacancy, for 4 years.

CRT/2011/17.10 Student Representatives on Court
Amy Johnson, SRC Vice-Principal for Student Support, would be a member of Court for the 2011/12 session, in place of Stuart Ritchie.
Kenneth Law had been appointed as SRC Assessor on Court until 31 October 2012.

CRT/2011/17.11 Employment-related Tribunal
A tribunal had been established to hear a disciplinary case relating to a member of staff in the College of Science & Engineering. The University’s case, that the conduct in question was good cause for dismissal, had been upheld. The individual had appealed and the appeal would be heard by an independent person.

CRT/2011/17.12 University of Glasgow Pension Scheme
The Trustees had identified June Crombie, a lawyer with extensive experience of pension schemes, to succeed David Anderson as chair of the Pension Scheme, with effect from 29 November. David Anderson's resignation meant that there was a gap among the employer-nominated trustees. Court approved the appointment of Lesley Cummings, HR Manager, as an employer-nominated Trustee for the Pension Scheme.
CRT/2011/17.13 Resolution

The following Resolution had been approved:

651 CHANGE OF NAME OF THE WILLIAM R LINDSAY CHAIR OF HEALTH POLICY AND ECONOMIC EVALUATION (AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION NO 472)

CRT/2011/18. Reports of Court Committees

CRT/2011/18.1 Finance Committee

CRT/2011/18.1.1 University Financial Statements as at 31 July 2011

The Director of Finance, Robert Fraser, gave a presentation on the University’s financial statements for the year to 31 July 2011.

There was an operating surplus for 2010-11 of £10.4m, which was £7.9m ahead of the original budget, and the sixth consecutive operating surplus after a decade of operating deficits. Court noted that the operating surpluses achieved over the last 6 years had only recovered approximately one half of the total loss which had been accumulated by the University over the previous 10 years. The University’s net assets as at 31 July 2011 totalled £560.7m, representing an increase of £38.5m in the year.

The operating surplus was ahead of budget due to a number of positive variances: salary savings through the Voluntary Severance Scheme and non-replacement of staff being achieved more quickly than had been assumed; a significant increase in income from Tuition Fees, particularly from international students; and improvements in the markets during 2010-11 which had increased endowment and investment income. Income and contributions from Research Grants had decreased and had failed to meet income targets.

The FRS 17 pension liability for the University of Glasgow Pension Fund (UGPS) and Strathclyde Pension Fund (SPF) had decreased in the year from £65.9m to £56.6m. Improvements in the market had increased the asset value by £27.4m, which was offset by an increase in liabilities due to increased life expectancy assumptions and reduction in the discount rate. An additional employer contribution of £0.85m had been made in 2010-11.

The University cash and deposits totalled £111.4m at year end, which was an increase of £23.6m in the year. About £20m of this total reflected ‘cash in advance’, so was committed to ongoing projects. A proportion of University year-end cash balances needed to be reserved to meet approved capital expenditure.

Court approved the University Financial Statements for the year to 31 July 2011.

CRT/2011/18.1.2 Universities Subsidiaries and Trust Financial Statements as at 31 July 2011

Court approved the financial statements of the subsidiary companies and Trust.

CRT/2011/18.1.3 Remit of Finance Committee

A draft revised remit for the Finance Committee, which reflected the powers and responsibilities as noted in the scheme of delegated authority from Court, had been circulated for Court’s approval. Court asked that the draft be edited with respect to the constraints relating to the capital budget. The revision would be discussed by the chair of
the Finance Committee, Ken Brown, and David Newall, and an updated version prepared.


Court noted the Endowments Investment Report at September 2011 and minutes of the Investment Advisory Committee meeting held in August 2011.

**CRT/2011/18.1.5 Financial Overview**

Court noted the Period 2 2011/12 Overview of Performance.

**CRT/2011/18.2 Audit Committee**

The minutes of the last meeting were noted. In the absence of Kevin Sweeney, chair of the Audit Committee, the annual report from the Audit Committee to Court was carried forward to the February 2012 meeting.

**CRT/2011/18.3 Remuneration Committee**

The Remuneration Committee had agreed that the 2011 Voluntary Severance Scheme had served the University well, and had agreed to recommend to Court that the basic terms of the 2011 scheme be retained, and that:

- voluntary severance arrangements should in future be offered at the discretion of University management;
- costs should be funded by Colleges/University Services;
- the Principal, the Vice-Principal (Strategy & Resources) and the Secretary of Court, acting jointly, should have authority to approve proposals for severance falling within the standard terms of the scheme;
- Remuneration Committee should consider any proposals that breached these standard terms and any proposals costing more than £100,000; and
- each meeting of Remuneration Committee should receive a report on all voluntary severance cases approved since its last meeting.

The scheme would be used to achieve reductions in cost or to address strategic priorities more effectively, but not to address unsatisfactory performance.

Court noted that this would not affect any situation that fell within the ambit of Structural Change Committee business and that normal University procedures would require to be followed in such circumstances.

Court approved the recommendation.

Court noted that the Professorial Review and the Reward and Recognition exercise for staff up to Level 9 would run as for 2011/2012 and that on the recommendation of the Principal there would be no increases in salary for members of the SMG. Court noted that owing to the national economic situation, the Remuneration Committee had felt unable to make any consolidated salary awards to SMG members since August 2008. Remuneration Committee members had expressed concern at the damage that might be done to the University if it was not possible to reward good performance in the future.
CRT/2011/18.4 Human Resources Committee
The Director of Human Resources, Ian Black, gave a presentation Key Performance Indicators for Human Resources. These covered details of average recruitment times, acceptances of job offers, training and development data, reward statistics (pay data) on a comparative basis, staff turnover and sickness absence analysis. Court also received details on diversity monitoring. Court heard that a staff attitude survey would be conducted in early 2012. SMG would be considering an action plan related to the KPIs.

Court thanked Mr Black for the work done on KPIs and noted the details. It was requested that more detail be sought on Russell Group and Scotland-wide academic pay data, and on figures for support staff. David Anderson, chair of the Human Resources Committee, requested that any further comments relating to the KPIs, including what indicators might usefully be used in the future, be emailed to Mr Black.

CRT/2011/18.5 Estates Committee
Court noted the Estates Committee’s approval of Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (SCENE) Phase II in the total sum of £6.018m.

CRT/2011/19. Report from the Rector
The Rector referred to earlier discussions on the Stevenson Building Extension/Glasgow University Union.

Amy Johnson updated Court on arrangements at the SRC for the remainder of the year. She and the two other Vice-Presidents would share the role of the President, and had split the duties.

CRT/2011/20. Communications from meeting of Senate 8 December 2011
The meeting had been postponed because of bad weather. A report of the rescheduled meeting on 13 January would be made to the next meeting of Court.

The Clerk of Senate thanked Mr Ross, Mr Newall and the Principal for having attended a meeting of the Senate Communications Working Group. The Group was continuing its work, including refreshing the operation of the Senate Business Committee and introducing a question and answer session involving the Principal, at Senate briefings.

CRT/2011/21. Any Other Business
There was no other business.

CRT/2011/22. Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting of the Court will be held on Wednesday 15 February 2012 in the Senate Room

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