

WEB COPY

Court

Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 8 October 2014 in the Senate Room

Present:

Mr Dave Anderson Employee Representative, Mr David Anderson General Council Assessor, Mr Graeme Bissett Co-opted Member, Ms Heather Cousins Co-opted Member, Ms Jacqui Dowd (attending for Ms Margaret Anne McParland Employee Representative), Dr Marie Freel Senate Assessor, Professor Karen Lury Senate Assessor, Mr Brian McBride General Council Assessor, Dr Morag Macdonald Simpson General Council Assessor, Mr Murdoch MacLennan Chancellor's Representative, Mr Donald Mackay SRC Assessor, Mr David Milloy Co-opted Member, Ms Margaret Morton Co-opted Member, Professor Anton Muscatelli Principal, Ms Breffni O'Connor SRC President, Mr David Ross General Council Assessor (Convener of Court), Dr Duncan Ross Senate Assessor, Dr Donald Spaeth Senate Assessor, Ms Lesley Sutherland General Council Assessor

In attendance:

Ms Ann Allen (Director of Estates & Buildings), Ms Christine Barr (Director of Human Resources), Professor John Briggs (Clerk of Senate), Professor James Conroy (Vice-Principal Internationalisation), Professor Jon Cooper (Vice-Principal Innovation & Knowledge Exchange), Professor Frank Coton (Vice-Principal Learning & Teaching), Professor Anna Dominiczak (Head of College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences and Vice-Principal), Professor David Fearn (Acting Head of College of Science & Engineering and Vice-Principal), Mr Robert Fraser (Director of Finance), Professor Neal Juster (Senior Vice-Principal), Ms Deborah Maddern (Administrative Officer), Professor Miles Padgett (Vice-Principal Research), Dr Dorothy Welch (Deputy Secretary)

Apologies:

Members: Mr Ken Brown Co-opted Member, Professor Christine Forde Senate Assessor, Cllr Pauline McKeever Glasgow City Council Representative, Ms Margaret Anne McParland Employee Representative

Attenders: Professor Anne Anderson (Head of College of Social Sciences and Vice-Principal), Mr David Newall (Secretary of Court), Professor Murray Pittock (Head of College of Arts and Vice-Principal),

CRT/2014/1. Announcements

Court welcomed Morag Macdonald Simpson and Lesley Sutherland (General Council Assessors), Breffni O'Connor (SRC President), Jon Cooper, Miles Padgett and David Fearn (Vice-Principals), and Dr Dorothy Welch (Deputy Secretary) to the Court meeting.

Marie Freel and Donald Mackay were attending their final meeting of Court. Nick Jonsson had demitted office as Senate Assessor over the summer. Court thanked them for their contributions to Court and wished them well in the future.

CRT/2014/2. Minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 25 June 2014

The minutes were approved.

CRT/2014/3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

CRT/2014/4. Report from the Principal

CRT/2014/4.1 Universities Superannuation Scheme USS

Earlier in the year, Court had heard that USS was continuing to engage in dialogue with the regulator, employers and UCU on the issues raised by the Trustees' first consultation on the Financial Management Plan associated with addressing the deficit in the scheme. At that point it had been intended to complete the valuation process and agree the Plan by the end of 2014, with discussions being held over the summer months between UUK and UCU on the Plan's elements.

Court heard that there had been close dialogue between UUK and the Joint Negotiating Committee (which included employer and union representatives) over the summer, as well as discussions between UUK and UCU. A possible solution to funding the deficit was a hybrid scheme, involving at its core a defined benefit scheme which would aim to protect lower earning staff, and a defined contribution scheme for more highly paid staff. At present the outcome was not finalised for reasons including a valuation of the scheme being undertaken. Employers had indicated that affordability was vital to the viability of the scheme, and that there needed to be flexibility if yields improved or worsened.

Court would be kept updated.

CRT 2014/4.2 Student Admissions including RUK.

Court noted details of student admissions figures for 2014 entry, for Undergraduate and Postgraduate (PGT/PGR), Home, RUK and International students.

CRT 2014/4.3 National Student Survey and University Rankings

Court noted details of recent University rankings tables and the NSS outcome. In August, the University had achieved its highest ever result in the NSS, with results showing that over 91% of students were satisfied with the quality of their course, a significant increase of 2 percentage points on last year's survey. This put the University second equal in the Russell Group and second outright in Scotland in terms of student satisfaction.

In the annual QS World Rankings, the University had been ranked equal 55th, a small drop from last year's 51st position. In the THE World University Rankings the University had risen from 117th last year to 94th this year. The Sunday Times/Times University League Table 2015 had placed the University 26th, a small drop from last year's 25th.

The University had been shortlisted for the THE University of the Year and had also been shortlisted in three other categories.

CRT 2014/4.4 New arrangements for SMG & PAG

Court noted new meeting arrangements for the SMG and Principal's Advisory Group, the latter of which was being expanded to comprise: members of SMG; Heads of School; Directors of Research Institutes; College Secretaries; the SRC President; the University Services Leadership

Team and the Director of the Development & Alumni Office.

CRT 2014/4.5 Update on Transnational education (TNE) developments

Court noted an update on TNE, including those involving the University of Glasgow Singapore and Singapore Institute of Technology; the University of Glasgow and the UESTC Joint Education Programme; and the University of Glasgow and Nankai University

CRT/2014/4.6 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: Academic Development and Strategy; Internationalisation activities; Lobbying/Policy Influencing and Promoting the University; Internal activities and Communications.

CRT/2014/5. Report from the Secretary of Court

CRT/2014/5.1 Court Strategy Day

Court noted a report of the Strategy Discussion Day held on 30 September, which had included discussions about the development of the University Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and the Estate Strategy.

With respect to the Estate Strategy, Court agreed recommendations that:

- i) the draft Estate Strategy be endorsed so that it could be used as a framework for the ongoing work and refined and developed into a brief summary document;
- ii) the Teaching and Learning Hub proposals be developed to full business case stage; and
- iii) Master planners and infrastructure consultants be appointed.

Court agreed that the Court Estate Strategy working group would continue to exist.

Court noted the key milestones identified, and agreed that that the next substantial report to Court would be in February 2015, when, following review by the Court Working Group, a series of recommendations would be presented on the business cases, which would include indicative costs, programme and funding arrangements.

CRT/2014/5.2 Ordinance on Composition of Court

An Ordinance on the composition of Court had not proceeded to the Privy Council in the summer. This had been because the Lord Advocate's Department had been concerned that in modernising its terminology - replacing "assessor" with "member" or "representative"- the University might appear to be changing the nature of the relevant persons' position on Court. This had not been a concern when the same changes were submitted in 2011.

Court agreed that:

- i) Ordinance 206 be withdrawn, and that a new Ordinance should be taken forward, which would address the concerns raised by the Lord Advocate's Office;

ii) a draft new Ordinance should be sent to the Privy Council for advice before Court consulted on the new Ordinance; while this could not guarantee that the ordinance would be granted if it ultimately went to the Privy Council, it was hoped that it would provide helpful assistance;

iii) subject to having received feedback from the Privy Council, Court should then decide at its December meeting to initiate the statutory consultation process.

Lesley Sutherland commented that she was not persuaded about the merits of the reduction in General Council Assessors, since this would diminish the General Council's capacity to contribute to University business, and reduce the plurality of appointment methods for members of Court. It was noted that these issues were ones that might be raised were the matter to proceed to consultation later in the year.

CRT/2014/5.3 Socially Responsible Investment Policy – Fossil Fuels

In June, Court had discussed a paper from the working group, which had been formed to consider the case for divestment from the fossil fuel extraction industry. A range of views had been expressed, and the working group had been asked to consider the matter further and report back, presenting more fully the case for divestment, and addressing concerns raised by Court members. A paper had been provided for Court's consideration.

Graeme Bissett explained that the paper reiterated the case for divestment in the wider context of the University's taking a responsible approach to climate change and making a commitment to reduce carbon consumption. The recommendation from the group was the University should gradually reduce its investment in the fossil fuel extraction industry; a short period was not considered realistic given that fossil fuels would be a reality for many years. It was also recognised that the position should not be a fixed one and that it should be reviewed from time to time, suggested as every 2 years. The group had also been mindful of Court's need to manage the institution's resources prudently and therefore for the need to look in more detail at the financial impact on the University; this included research and philanthropic funding. At the core of the considerations had been the question of whether the terms of the policy had been met, in particular whether the criterion of such investments being 'wholly contrary to the University's value systems either as reflected in the Mission Statement or the Strategic Plan or in regard to wider issues of social, environmental and humanitarian concern'. The group had concluded that if investments continued in fossil fuels, this was not aligned to the University's policy of reducing reliance on fossil fuels: it would be contrary to the University's value systems to take no action on fossil fuel investment.

Accordingly, these various matters having been considered, the revised recommendations to Court, from the group, were:

.1 that the University's direct investment in the fossil fuel extraction industry should be managed in a controlled manner such that the value of such investments does not exceed the current level of 10% of the endowment portfolio for any appreciable time period; and

.2 that the current level of investment should be reduced to zero over the next 10 years, subject to Recommendation 3 and biennial re-evaluation of the financial and other impacts of the divestment policy on the University along with the scope for increased investment in renewable energy sources.

.3 that prior to executing Recommendation 2, a further examination of the financial impact of that Recommendation be conducted through dialogue with the Glasgow University Climate Action Society (GUCAS) and the University's Investment Committee [IAC] to provide assurance to Court as to the limited scale of the prospective financial impact.

In discussion, views were expressed by some members of Court that the approach being recommended was too blunt; that the group had not taken a balanced approach, by only allowing the Climate Action Society to put forward a case; that the Scottish economy and many

jobs were underpinned by the industry, from which economy the University benefitted in terms of government HE funding; that steps were already being taken by the University to reduce its carbon emissions; that fundraising might suffer, including in the context of the re-development of the campus; that more detail on which companies would be involved was needed, since many were multi-disciplinary; that the 'wholly contrary' test was not met; and that there might be wider implications in terms of the University's other activities being open to question. A question was raised about whether Court members, as trustees associated with the relevant funds, were legally permitted to take a decision to disinvest as was being proposed, given the duties to beneficiaries. A further comment was made about insufficient financial information having been made available.

It was clarified that the group's focus was on companies whose primary activity was fossil fuel extraction. The University's current investment in these companies was valued at approximately £18M. A comment was noted to the effect that a staged approach was being recommended, and that there were various steps, including consideration by various University committees, where the issue might be revisited if circumstances changed, therefore the approach was a measured one.

Others agreed with the recommendations, including the relatively long-term approach being put forward and the mindfulness towards the planet's future that was being shown. The lead that would be shown if the recommendations were agreed would be a positive step and could benefit the University's reputation, rather than disadvantage the institution. An ethical or principled decision of this nature should not be predicated upon financial considerations. There was not an inconsistency of approach, since the University was taking steps to reduce its carbon emissions, and disinvestment would be wholly in line with diversification away from reliance on fossil fuels.

Following the discussion, the working group's recommendations were approved by a majority of those present and entitled to vote, subject to the condition contained in them with regard to assurances about the financial impact for the University being met, and subject also to advice being sought on whether the decision to disinvest could be made without breaching trustees' fiduciary duties. It was noted that the investment managers would be aware of the activities of companies in the portfolio and would be able to advise on which were primarily engaged in fossil fuel extraction. Liaison by the group with that committee and the GUCAG would be taken forward by the Secretary of Court.

David Anderson, General Council Assessor, recorded a concern that from a governance perspective it was not satisfactory that Court had been asked to consider recommendations in the absence of detail about the full financial impact of disinvestment.

Court would be updated at its next meeting.

CRT/2014/5.4 Conflict Minerals

At the June meeting, Court had heard that the Students' Representative Council had supported a motion relating to the Conflict Free Campus Initiative, by calling on the University to make the reduction of the use of conflict minerals a priority in its procurement policy. Court had agreed to defer discussion on next steps, given that the fossil fuel disinvestment item had not concluded.

Court agreed that it would ask a working group to consider the matter and report to the next meeting of Court, agreeing that it would be important for the group to have professional advice on procurement. The group would comprise two lay members, one Senate Assessor, one SRC representative, the Secretary of Court and the Head of Procurement.

CRT/2014/5.5 Nominations Committee Business

The Nominations Committee had met on 30 September and agreed that recruitment to 'external' lay vacancies on the Audit, HR and Remuneration Committees would be taken forward by advertisement, with recommendations to Court to follow in due course. Recommendations relating to lay Court members filling some Court Committee vacancies, including vacancies on Nominations Committee itself, would also be made.

CRT/2014/5.6 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance

Court noted a response to a governance questionnaire from the Committee of Scottish Chairs, arising from the Code introduced in July 2013. The CSC had been monitoring implementation by all HEIs.

The Code envisaged an annual self-assessment by each governing body of its compliance with the code. A proposal for this would be developed in the current session.

CRT/2014/5.7 USS Consultation

Court noted a response as sent to USS, relating to the Universities UK consultation on USS funding and benefits. The overall message had been that given the level of scheme deficit, the University agreed that there was a need for reform, and believed that the proposed changes – including an estimated deficit reduction of £6bn - were the correct way to proceed if USS is to be sustainable into the future.

Court noted a comment from Dave Anderson, Employee Representative, that the response should more correctly have been referred to as Court response and not a University one.

CRT/2014/5.8 RUK Fees

Further information on RUK Fees had been provided for the June 2014 Court meeting. Court noted a clarification relating to the small number of RUK students who spent just three years at Glasgow; for this group, fees were not reduced.

CRT/2014/5.9 Court Business 2014/15

Court noted: Standing Orders for Court including appendices with details of Court committee dates for this session; the Statement of Primary Responsibilities; and the Schedule of Court Business for the coming year, for reference.

The attendance lists for meetings of Court and its committees for 2013/14 had been reviewed; there were no outstanding issues to report in connection with this.

CRT/2014/5.10 Senate Assessors on Court

Professor Miles Padgett had demitted office following the May Court meeting, given his appointment as Vice Principal. Over the summer, Professor Nicholas Jonsson had stepped down as Senate Assessor wef 1 September; Dr Marie Freel would step down in early November following her appointment to a post outside the University. Senate would appoint three Assessors to replace them.

CRT/2014/5.11 Honorary Fellowship nominations

Details were provided, in confidence, of three nominations for Honorary Fellowships of the University, which Court approved. The nominations had been approved by the Honorary Degrees Committee.

CRT/2014/5.12 SFC Financial Memorandum

Court noted details of a new SFC Financial Memorandum for the HE sector.

CRT/2014/5.13 Genome Sequencing Equipment

Under delegated powers, the Convener of Court, Principal and Secretary of Court had approved the University spending £1.6m on genome sequencing equipment. The University was part of a consortium - funded by the Chief Scientist Office, Cancer Research UK and the Medical Research Council - which would sequence cancer samples to create a world leading database to underpin ongoing research. The University had been asked to underwrite capital expenditure totalling £1.6m. This would be completely funded if the project developed as envisaged. However, at this point there was a risk that some shortfall may be incurred.

CRT/2014/6. Learning and Teaching Strategy

Professor Frank Coton updated Court on the Learning and Teaching Strategy, including performance against Key Performance Indicators, which were noted by Court. These included: a KPI relating to Home/EU UG population, where the Home UG size was being reduced towards the target and EU admissions had been more tightly controlled; the overall Home/EU intake target has been achieved. A more granular approach to admissions was being developed to control numbers in high demand subjects; it was noted that admissions to General degrees would not be affected in a negative way by this approach. RUK student numbers continued to be healthy, with recruitment this year and last significantly above historic levels. Court also noted KPIs in relation to student progression, employment and UG entry tariff.

The Strategy's guiding principles were excellence in teaching, the learning environment, and in the physical and virtual infrastructure; fostering investigative learning through research-led teaching; inclusion, access and opportunity; and a truly supportive environment. Court noted updates under the nine key objectives. Progress in relation to priority areas included: Retention, where the MD40 support group was providing additional support to new WP students and there had been improved progression of MD40 students; Assessment and Feedback where there was a two-year collaborative project targeted at improved efficiency and effectiveness in assessment, and increased use of automated, targeted feedback via the VLE across a range of subject areas; Embedding Graduate Attribute development, where College Graduate Attributes "champions" were now developing College specific activities and a social media campaign was in progress; Sustainable Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Growth, where new distance learning Masters programmes in several areas of Health Sciences and Copyright Law were coming on stream in 2015; Innovation in our Provision, where a range of innovation projects were being supported through the Learning and Teaching Development fund, with a significant focus on technology enhanced learning and teaching.

Development of a new Learning and Teaching Strategy was now underway in parallel with development of University Strategic Plan. Other priorities for the coming year were the development of the estate to support student number growth and the evolution of the teaching model, and continued roll-out of online learning activity.

The University had undergone the Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) in the past

year. The outcome had been that the University's approach to the maintenance of quality and standards was "effective" with no caveats. This was the best possible outcome from the ELIR process. Particular areas of good practice included an effective culture of self-evaluation, student engagement and a strategic approach to widening participation.

Court noted continuing excellent performance in the NSS. Court also noted highlights relating to online learning, where SMG had agreed to invest £2.3m in an online learning initiative to develop Masters level programmes with high market potential aligned to the University's strengths; and on-campus courses to help create a more flexible learning environment on campus. New programmes and courses were now under development in Medicine, CREATE, the Business School and in the College of Arts. The University had delivered two MOOCs through a partnership with FutureLearn.

Professor Coton was thanked for the briefing.

CRT/2014/7. Reports of Court Committees

CRT/2014/7.1 Finance Committee

CRT/2014/7.1.1 Capex applications

The Finance Committee had approved capital expenditure for refurbishment of the University Corridor premises at South Glasgow Hospital, with the £3m required for the refurbishment being covered by a grant agreed by the Scottish Government. Finance Committee had also approved a capital expenditure request for £4.26m of funding to undertake infrastructure works on the Gilmorehill campus, taking advantage of the district heating CHP installation planned during 2014/2015. Finance Committee had also approved a capital expenditure request for £0.5m to provide a new state-of-the-art facility for Mass Spectrometry (MS) in the School of Chemistry.

CRT/2014/7.1.2 Endowments Investment Reports

Court noted endowments investment reports

CRT/2014/7.1.3 Financial reports

Court noted an Overview of Performance and a debtors report as at 31 July 2014.

The report was noted.

CRT/2014/7.2 Audit Committee

The Committee had welcomed its new chair, Dr Paul Brady. The Committee's business had included receiving: updates on the pensions schemes and on the development of the Estate Strategy; the draft Internal Audit plan 2014/15 including the methodology used to compile the plan, which the Committee had approved; reports on recent internal audits; update reports on actions against recommendations from prior internal audits; and details of the University risk register.

The report was noted.

Dr Welch would update Dr Ross more fully on the audit of data assurance with regard to Performance and Development Review for Academics, and on the timing of the audit that would include MyCampus performance.

CRT/2014/7.3 Estates Committee

CRT/2014/7.3.1 Estates Strategy

Court noted progress made on the Estates Strategy.

CRT/2014/7.3.2 CapEx Applications

Court noted and endorsed Estates Committee's approval of CapEx applications in respect of: Gilmorehill Infrastructure Improvement Works £4,256,188 incl. VAT; and Refurbishment of University Corridor at South Glasgow Hospital £3m incl. VAT.

The report was noted.

CRT/2014/7.4 Human Resources Committee

The HR Director had provided an update to the HR Committee highlighting a number of substantive areas including an update on proposed changes to USS; the co-location of University Service areas; early career researcher development; internationalisation; gender pay; performance pay and reward; an update from an equality and diversity perspective on applications for Athena SWAN recognition; and recruitment.

The Committee had received presentations from the HR Director providing an update on Staff Survey outcomes - further details of which would be provided to Court in December - and on the People & Organisational Development Strategy, with particular emphasis being placed on the action planning and subsequent implementation.

The report was noted.

CRT/2014/7.5 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee

The Committee had received: an update on the stress indicator section of the staff survey; reports from Occupational Health and the Safety & Environmental Protection Services; a report on the take-up of the Employee Assistance programme; and details of a survey of directors of professional services in relation to routes for staff to raise health and safety issues.

Following a review of the effectiveness of the committee, a subgroup of the committee was being formed to discuss changes to its operation.

The report was noted.

CRT/2014/8. Communications from Meeting of Council of Senate held on 2 October 2014

The report was noted. Senate had received updates on: the Ordinance relating to the composition of Court, the development of Policy and Questionnaire for Course Feedback, and the recent staff survey. Senate had received details of recent league tables and the NSS.

In line with the previously agreed arrangement with Senate to allow members of Court to submit observations on nominations for honorary degrees, the Clerk of Senate John Briggs advised Court of the 2014/2015 nominations, on a confidential basis. Members of Court could contact the Clerk of Senate should they have observations to make.

CRT/2014/9. Annual report for SFC – Institutional-led Review of Quality and Governing Body Statement of Assurance

Court had received a copy of the University's draft annual report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on institution-led review of quality for AY 2013-14. The contents were specified by the SFC. The statement summarised review activity undertaken by the University of its provision for students, i.e. Periodic Subject Reviews (PSR), Graduate School Reviews and the University Services Administrative Review Programme (ARP) 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.

Having noted details of how the University assured the effectiveness of arrangements for maintaining academic standards and quality, Court agreed that the required statement of assurance could be signed off by the Convener of Court, as follows:-

“On behalf of the governing body of [University of Glasgow], I confirm that we have considered the institutions arrangements for the management of academic standards and the quality of the learning experience for AY 2013-14, including the scope and impact of these. I further confirm that we are satisfied that the institution has effective arrangements to maintain standards and to assure and enhance the quality of its provision. We can therefore provide assurance to the Council that the academic standards and the quality of the learning provision at this institution continue to meet the requirements set by the Council.”

CRT/2014/10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

CRT/2014/11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Court will be held on Wednesday 17 December 2014 at 2pm in the Senate Room.