

General Council Half Yearly Meeting 26th June 2016

Minute of General Council Half Yearly Meeting held 26th June 2016, Yudo Seminar Room, Wolfson Medical Building, University of Glasgow

Item

1 Introduction and Welcome

The Chancellor, Sir Kenneth Calman, welcomed and thanked those present for attending the meeting. He introduced the panel – Amber Higgins, Clerk to the General Council (GC), Professor Anton Muscatelli, Principal, and John Marsh, Convenor of the General Council Business Committee (GCBC).

2 Minutes of meeting of 30th January 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2016 were approved.

3 Report of Convenor of the General Council Business Committee

Convenor, John Marsh, thanked the Chancellor for his introduction and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Convenor reported that the Business Committee had held two meetings since the last Half Yearly meeting in January, with the Committee continuing to work closely with the University on a number of key issues. The Convenor reported that there had been a number of changes in the membership of the GCBC. The Committee had welcomed Dr Camron Marshall, who was elected at the last half yearly meeting. It was also reported that David Ross and Brian McBride terms of office as General Council Assessors would be coming to an end in July 2016. The Convenor thanked both David and Brian for all their help and support to the GCBC over the last 4 years and stated that they would be missed. It was also reported that as the change in the number of General Council Assessors had been amended in the ordinance, there would be no election for their replacement. It was noted that the next round of elections would be for GCBC members in January 2017.

The Convenor reported that the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act had been passed by the Scottish Parliament on the 8 March 2016 and had been passed by Royal Assent on 8 April 2016. The Key features of the bill included the election of a senior lay member to chair court, requirement for two Trade Union Members, no entitlement for General Council to appoint members and the ability for Ministers to determine content and functions of Court and Senate by Regulation withdrawn. The GCBC would continue to monitor the impact of the new legislation on the University.

It was noted that the General Affairs Standing Committee continued to highlight areas of concern to the GCBC and the Convenor thanked the University for responses that they provide. The issues covered included non-completion rates, graduation fees and widening access. The Convenor stated that the Standing Orders Working Group had been placed on hold until the impact of the HE Governance Bill was fully known. The GCBC also continued to work closely with the University Trust, Academic Standards Committee and the Development and Alumni Office.

The Convenor reported that a meeting with the all the ancient universities in Scotland had taken place at St Andrews and discussions had centred on HE Governance Act, effect of Scottish Government funding for Scottish Students and improving the contribution made by General Councils.

The Convenor stated that as the GCBC represents the views of the General Council and to ensure that the GCBC is able to communicate effectively with GC members, work would be continued on developing a communication strategy in collaboration with the University, this will ensure that there is two way communication with GC Members and encourage more members to contact the GCBC. The Committee would also continue to work closely with the University and Senior Management on any relevant matters.

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The Chancellor thanked the Convenor for his report and thanked all the GCBC members for all their hard work on behalf of the General Council. It was noted that no questions were raised and thanked John for his presentation.

4 Principal's Address and Questions

The Principal thanked all those present for their attendance at the meeting and sought to reassure the General Council that following the EU Referendum result nothing will change in the short term. It was reported that an email had been sent to all staff and students which emphasised just how much this University values EU staff and student contribution to the University community and that they were a vital and essential part of our University. The email highlighted how The University of Glasgow was founded in the European tradition, and nothing will change our international outlook which will continue to look to Europe for our academic collaborations. The email also outlined the funding situation for EU students in the short term.

The Principal stated that his report would focus on the University's progression against the KPIs, an update on recent international activity and research successes and then finally an update on the Campus Development.

The Principal reported that June 2016 marked the 1st anniversary of the launch of the new strategic plan, Inspiring People – Changing the World. As part of the plan 22 KPI's were approved by Court in June 2015 with a small number being measured for the first time. Of the 18 remaining – 12 are showing positive progression, 5 are relatively flat and 1 is moving in the wrong direction (Glasgow's Carbon Footprint). Further detailed information on the KPIs is available on the presentation. (insert URL)

It was noted that Internationalisation continued to be a key part of the University's strategy and the Principal gave three examples of recent activity in this area. It was reported that a group of world-leading universities, including Glasgow, had held an inaugural meeting in Brussels to found the Guild of European Research Intensive Universities. The Guild will bring together universities that demonstrate excellence in teaching, research and policy formation from across Europe to collaborate on the creation of innovative solutions to some of Europe's most intractable scientific and social challenges.

It was also reported that the University and Nankai University had signed a Memorandum of Understanding to further develop academic collaboration and to extend student mobility. In other areas it was reported that one of the largest ever academic delegations from the University, representing all four Colleges, was recently in Hong Kong, to establish new links and reinforce existing links with the University of Hong Kong. Over the past three years, there had been 9 active research collaborations between the two universities resulting in published work.

The Principal also updated the GC on the involvement of the University in the discovery of Gravitational waves, which was widely recognised as one of the most important discoveries of our time and the leading role that the University is playing in combatting the threat from the Zika virus. The University was also involved in a significant breakthrough in the understanding of pancreatic cancer and that it is not one but several diseases.

The Principal was also pleased to update the GC on the number of staff receiving National Recognition and that the university was firmly focused on the future and the £1bn expansion of the campus. The LTC Hub would be the first project with an aim to start on site in January 2017 and the project completed by June 2019. This will lead to increased study space and an improvement in the student experience.

It was also noted that research would continue to be a key priority and to develop a more integrated College, cross College and Research Institute environment, to enable energising interaction that was essential for forging and developing new ideas.

The Chancellor thanked the Principal for his report and welcomed the positive news delivered in his report which showed that the University continued to grow and move forward, before inviting comments.

GC members commented on the positive report by the Principal and were delighted that the University continued to go from strength to strength under the guidance of the Principal.

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A GC member asked about the financing of the campus redevelopment and if the EU referendum would have any impact on the finances. The Principal reported that the Senior Management would look into all potential impacts of the EU referendum and do their best to limit their impact on the University.

A GC member asked how many of the existing buildings would be retained on the Western Infirmary Site. The Principal confirmed that 5 buildings, which were listed, would remain.

The Chancellor drew this section to a close and thanked the Principal for his presentation.

5 AOCB

The Chancellor thanked all those present and informed the meeting that the next meeting would take place in January 2017 with further details available on the General Council Webpages.

The Chancellor closed the meeting by thanking all present for their attendance. Following the meeting Mrs Lesley Richmond, Director Deputy Director and University Archivist /Senior Research Fellow (Library) gave a presentation on the History of the Move to Gilmour Hill.