

## **WEB COPY**

### **Court**

#### **Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 12 February 2020 in the Senate Room Main Building**

##### **Present:**

Cllr Susan Aitken Glasgow City Council Assessor, Mr Aamer Anwar Rector (to item 31.2 inclusive), Ms Teresa Baños SRC Assessor on Court, Mr Graeme Bissett Co-opted Member, Ms Heather Cousins Co-opted Member, Dr Craig Daly Trade Union Nominee, Professor Carl Goodyear Elected Academic Staff Member, Mr Christopher Kennedy Elected Professional Services Representative, Dr Simon Kennedy Elected Academic Staff Member, Mr Scott Kirby SRC President, Professor Kirsteen McCue Elected Academic Staff Member, Dr Morag Macdonald Simpson General Council Assessor, Ms Margaret Anne McParland Trade Union Nominee, Mr Ronnie Mercer Co-opted Member, Dr June Milligan Co-opted Member, Mr David Milloy Co-opted Member, Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli Principal, Ms Elspeth Orcharton Co-opted Member, Ms Elizabeth Passey Co-opted Member (Convener of Court), Mr Gavin Stewart Co-opted Member, Ms Lesley Sutherland General Council Assessor, Dr Bethan Wood Elected Academic Staff Member

##### **Attending:**

Dr David Duncan (Chief Operating Officer [COO] & University Secretary), Mr Robert Fraser (Director of Finance), Ms Deborah Maddern (Administrative Officer), Professor Jill Morrison (Vice-Principal & Clerk of Senate), Ms Ann Allen (Director of Estates & Commercial Services) (to item 27 inclusive), Professor Frank Coton (VP Academic & Educational Innovation) (for item 29), Susan Ashworth (Executive Director of Information Services) (for item 29), Mark Johnston (Director of IT Services) (for item 29)

##### **Apologies:**

**Members:** Mr David Finlayson Co-opted Member, Professor Nick Hill Elected Academic Staff Member, Dr Ken Sutherland Co-opted Member

**Attendees:** Professor Neal Juster (Senior Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

#### **CRT/2019/24 Announcements**

Court recorded its sadness at the death in November 2019 of Breffni O'Connor, a past President of the SRC and past member of Court.

The Rector, Aamer Anwar, was attending his final meeting of Court. Court thanked him for all his contributions to Court business and wished him well.

There were the following declarations of interest in relation to business to be conducted at the meeting: Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli as a Trustee of USS, as an ongoing declaration, given the updates on the scheme; and Elizabeth Passey in relation to arrangements for her annual appraisal.

It was recorded that Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Senior Vice-Principal Professor Neal Juster had briefed Court at the pre-lunch session, covering the capital plan review, including details covered at a recent workshop involving member of the Finance and Estates Committees.

Court was reminded that papers and business were confidential.

### **CRT/2019/25. Minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 11 December 2019**

The minutes were approved.

In the context of the last meeting having included approval of an OCGG recommendation that further work be undertaken to develop the preferred option of setting up a wholly-owned subsidiary company to manage the Small Animal Hospital, Dr Duncan clarified that his reference to the arrangements not becoming a model for other parts of the University related to academic activity: it was the case that the University Shop operated in this way already, and a similar subsidiary would provide catering in the James McCune Smith building when it opened.

### **CRT/2019/26. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **CRT/2019/27. Capital Plan Review**

Court had received a briefing from Professor Neal Juster, Senior Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, ahead of the meeting.

Court now received a paper on progress that had been made with respect to the review of, and changes to, the capital plan, noting also that a joint workshop had been held between members of the Estate and Finance Committees on 28 January. The meeting had discussed the impact of assumptions made on future income, staff costs, capital expenditure, maintenance and refurbishment of the existing estate, and investments in IT on projected cashflow. This had led to discussion on the desirability and quantum of future borrowing. The paper outlined the main themes of the workshop and the next steps in determining the level of capital expenditure necessary and affordable in achieving the University's ambition.

Details of progress on committed projects were included in the paper; these included a summary of the expected outturn of the major projects currently approved by Court. Court noted details of projects that it was considered should be progressed ("Should do" projects); projects that were considered desirable but currently unaffordable ("Could do" projects); areas where the Estates Committee had recommended that the projects should be formally halted; and projects that it was considered should progress only if external funding was secured to cover the costs.

The paper also included a proposed approach to maintenance and minor projects, with the former categorised as either statutory compliance; reactive maintenance; life-cycle maintenance; or planned preventive maintenance. Details were provided of actions currently being taken against each, together with the future approach and proposed spend. With regard to the IT Plan, the paper included a cashflow forecast associated with the IT investment plan. That plan would be subject to further testing as costs were refined. The plan was divided into five categories: Infrastructure as a Service Programme (IAASP); Network Infrastructure Investment Programme (NIIP); Enterprise Integration; minor projects; and outer-years projects.

Details were provided in relation to the consolidated cash-flow and borrowing restrictions, and with regard to risks associated with the capital plan.

With regard to the next steps in the development of the capital plan, over the next 6-9

months, greater clarity would be gained as to the expected profile of spend on maintenance and minor projects; in addition, with respect to the IT strategy and expenditure, firmer plans and better costing would be developed in the coming three months for the IAASP and NIIP. With respect to developing the overall cash forecast and flexibility, further borrowing would be looked into for funding of 'should do' projects; plans would continue to be developed with certain Schools, to deliver international student number growth; and opportunities would be explored to increase operating cash through the current budget cycle, including cost savings and further growth.

Ronnie Mercer, chair of the Estates Committee, noted that the plan was not fully finalised but the paper provided a clear and meaningful direction of travel, such that members who were not also members of the Finance and/or Estates Committees could readily understand and be engaged with the process. There was clarity about how the University was moving forward and about what the definitions of the various categories of projects were. No further major capital projects would be presented to Court for approval in 2020, but significant work would be undertaken now to further develop all the inter-related areas of the plan, including the possibility of additional borrowing. The Arts and Engineering projects had been removed from the plan.

Graeme Bissett, chair of the Finance Committee, referred to the summary of the recent Estates Committee and Finance Committee workshop, details of which were in the Finance Committee report. He reminded Court that c£400m of expenditure had been committed via Court to date, under the capital plans approved in December 2016 and June 2018, but that there had been changes of a significant nature since then, in particular an increase in the cost of the major projects, and more work being required on minor projects, which on an aggregated basis were also costly. Together with IT requirements and maintenance needs, including lifecycle repairs and smaller scale expenditure, there was an increase to estimates previously provided. This reduced the capacity for CapEx projects that had previously been listed; in this context, the Arts and Engineering projects would not be proceeding, and other projects had been deferred. In terms of financing, the operating cashflows were stronger than they had been at the time of the last approval of the capital plan c18 months ago. Going forward, however, it was necessary to look at the minimum cash positions, which showed that if all committed and Should-do projects were to be delivered, and on the basis of the mid-case operational cashflow assumptions, then an additional £50-60m would be required in the mid-2020s. Beyond that, the cashflows were positive, as they had been c18 months ago when they had been assessed. At its recent meeting, the Finance Committee had considered the possibility of more borrowing, with the matter being work in progress and not the subject of a decision at this stage; however, the additional potential capital expenditure outlined did point to a potential need for additional borrowing. All new projects and any decisions around borrowing would come to Court.

In discussion, June Milligan noted that it had been acknowledged at the pre-Court briefing that there had been a shift in expectations around the capital plan that had been approved by Court previously, and given that the plan had moved on it would be helpful to receive further information on proposed future plans in due course.

The Principal noted that the analysis of potential new projects within the dynamic plan would take another nine months, therefore there would be no major CapExes coming to Court until late 2020 or early 2021, and the overall affordability also needed to be looked at. As such, in around nine months' time there would be a further update, with a careful analysis of figures included, in particular around the 'Should do' projects.

A question was asked about whether the costings included projects envisaged under the Smart Campus initiative. It was noted that further work on IT infrastructure was required before elements of the Smart Campus initiative could be taken further. Ann Allen noted that

an outline business case was in train, with advisers being engaged to provide costings and individual projects.

With regard to maintenance and minor projects, a team was investigating the various areas, with the risks to be better identified to provide more clarity.

It was requested that the maintenance section of the plan be moved so as to sit just below the 'Should do' section.

Court's thanks to Neal Juster and Ann Allen were recorded.

## **CRT/2019/28. Report from the Principal**

### *CRT/2019/28.1 Higher Education Developments*

#### *Brexit*

Given the UK's departure from the EU, the sector was focusing on the post-Brexit immigration regime and the negotiations on research and student mobility.

On 26 January the government had announced that there would be an unlimited number of "Global Talent" visas aimed at attracting top researchers. This would replace the existing Tier 1 "exceptional talent" visa route currently used by a small proportion of researchers. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) would be able to endorse visa applicants joining the Royal Society, the British Academy and the Royal Academy of Engineering, among others, with no cap on the number of people who could come to the UK via the visa route, and no salary threshold. The revised route would also have a "fast-track" scheme, managed by UKRI; this would enable UK-based research projects that have received "recognised prestigious grants and awards" to recruit more quickly.

The Scottish Government had launched its migration strategy on 27 January, calling for a tailored migration policy within a UK framework. The HE sector in Scotland had supported this proposal.

The sector continued to lobby for the implementation of the UK Government's promise on post-study work visas for students. The Vice-Chancellors' group (UUK) had recently responded to the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) consultation on the future immigration system, saying that the government's proposed Australian points-based system could be achieved through reforms to the UK's existing skilled worker visa route. If an Australian-style system were to be introduced, UUK had recommended that having a job offer should be prioritised, to allow employers to recruit individuals and skills regardless of background. UUK had also recommended that the overall salary threshold for the Tier 2 visa should be lowered from £30k to £21k, or the appropriate rate for the relevant profession, since the £30k salary threshold was not a good indicator of an employee's skill level or contribution to an institution. Court would be kept updated.

#### *Post-18 Funding Review in England*

The Conservative manifesto had promised careful consideration of the Augar recommendations on fees, but no specific proposals had been made on fee reductions. The report had recommended a reduction in the amount that universities could charge, from £9,250 to £7,500 a year. While the headline fee reduction seemed unlikely to be adopted in its entirety, it was expected that some elements of Augar might be adopted, including increases in funding for FE, and potentially the introduction of some number controls for 'low quality/low value added' courses in English Universities.

The President of UUK had recently warned of knock-on effects on R&D from the Augar Review recommendations, stating that cuts to the funding that English universities received for teaching could discourage students from pursuing academic careers and lead to a shortage of researchers. There was a tension between the potential for reduced research and the Government's stated intention to invest in R&D, which would require an increase in the number of scientists.

#### *Muscatelli Report*

Feedback on the recommendations contained in the report was current being obtained from stakeholders. A detailed response from Scottish Government was awaited.

#### *CRT/2019/28.2 Scottish Budget 2020-21*

The Scottish Budget 2020-21 had been scheduled to take place on 12 December 2019. Because of the UK General Election and the cancellation of the UK Government budget at the end of 2019, the Scottish Budget 2020-21 had been delayed. It had been published on 6 February, before the UK budget on 11 March. In cash terms there had been an increase of £18.9m (1.84%) for Teaching, although in real terms this was a standstill position; and there had been an increase in the capital allocation. Early dialogue had started between the sector and the Scottish Government with regard to clarification about the Research budget, which had been wholly reclassified as capital, though it was not anticipated that there would be restrictions on the way it could be spent.

#### *CRT/2019/28.3 USS*

The JEP's second report had been published on 13 December, its main purpose having been to establish key principles to underpin the future joint approach of UUK and UCU to the valuation of the USS fund. The report had made linked recommendations about the governance of the scheme, the valuation methodology and a possible way forward. Steps included: establishing a new, jointly-agreed purpose statement and shared valuation principles; creating joint bodies within USS, including a valuation forum and a high-level joint union/employer steering committee to agree future direction of the scheme; agreeing a valuation methodology around the agreed purpose of the scheme and a re-articulation of the Trustee's, employers' and employees' risk appetites; and investigating different approaches to contributions to address the high level of scheme opt outs among younger and lower paid staff. The panel had published a 'road map' for the parties to work jointly towards implementing the recommendations.

The tripartite group had met in mid-January, with the members (UCU, UUK and USS) committing to a collective dialogue. The meeting had agreed to reach a better collective understanding and discuss the recommendations.

#### *CRT/2019/28.4 Senior Management Group appointment*

At the last meeting it had been reported that consultations had begun regarding the position of VP/Head of College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, with Professor Dame Anna Dominiczak's current period of appointment coming to an end on 31 July 2020. There would be a transition period while a search process was undertaken to appoint a successor, with Professor Dominiczak remaining in post during that period.

#### *CRT 2019/28.5 Key Activities*

Court noted a summary 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; and Internal activities and Communications and Alumni events.

In discussion, the work of the John Smith Centre for Public Service was highlighted, the Principal agreeing to circulate a summary of its recent activities.

#### *CRT 2019/28.6 Coronavirus outbreak*

Court heard that the outbreak was the largest emergent risk for the University's business overall. The Secretary's report would also cover the matter. Daily meetings were taking place, with update communications to the University community, based on public health authority guidance. This included information on social media and information specifically for the Chinese student community. The University was in touch with staff and students in China.

Longer term contingencies were being looked at also, including pre-session courses, summer schools, student recruitment, admissions and other recurrent activities that might be affected by the outbreak. The risk register would be updated, and the Audit & Risk Committee updated at its March meeting.

In discussion, with regard to support for Chinese students with relatives in China who might be affected, it was confirmed that the University and SRC were in close contact with the community of Chinese students and would be able to ascertain if there were particular anxieties. With regard to the impact of a possible pandemic, this would be looked at in the context of longer-term planning for the University, although at present it was difficult to plan ahead with any degree of certainty, given the lack of data and the variables involved. It was confirmed that advice was available for staff or students travelling to China. With regard to transnational education arrangements with partners in China, contingencies were in place for educational provision and testing, including activities being undertaken remotely.

#### **CRT/2019/29. IT Strategy Update/Information Services Strategic Plan**

Professor Frank Coton VP Academic & Educational Innovation (chair of IPSC), Susan Ashworth (Executive Director of Information Services), Mark Johnston (Director of IT Services) attended the meeting to brief Court.

The accompanying paper provided the current draft of the University Technology strategy and detailed the major components of the associated investment plan. The briefing outlined the key elements of the strategy and explained the motivators behind the main programmes and investments covered by the strategy. The briefing also outlined the steps being taken to develop the organisational capacity and capability to deliver the strategy.

The context of the strategy development included a legacy of underinvestment in IT at a time of significant growth; operational structures that were not currently fit for purpose (including some provision being 'non-intuitive'); the University entering a new strategic cycle (with the plan being developed in parallel with IT plans), extending its physical infrastructure and engaging in transformation; and the declaration of a climate emergency. Court noted a summary of the IT 'Vision', which envisaged that technology would intuitively and seamlessly enable excellence in all that the University undertook. A summary of the principles behind the Smart Campus initiative was provided; this was one of the major programmes and projects that also included: the Infrastructure as a Service Programme (investing in fit-for-purpose, future-proofed and sustainable data-centre infrastructure, including Cloud platforms); the Network Infrastructure Investment Programme (investing in a network infrastructure, including pervasive wi-fi, which would enable seamless connectivity, support mobility, new ways of working and new ways of learning and teaching); Unified

Communications (implementing a unified communications platform to replace the existing telephony system, which would support flexible and agile working, collaboration and promote efficient space use); and the Enterprise Integration Platform project (implementing an IT architecture which connected the University's systems, driving improvements to data quality, increasing availability and enabling re-use of data; with hybrid systems at the core). Court noted the associated people strategy to deliver the projects; a central aspect of this was to have the right people in the right roles, which would include development of staff and upskilling as well as reshaping through VS where this was necessary.

The strategy was at an advanced stage of development and would be finalised alongside the new University Strategic plan in the coming months. Analysis was ongoing about what would give the best value for money.

Documents providing fuller overviews of the Infrastructure as a Service Programme, Network Infrastructure Investment Programme and Enterprise Integration Platform had been made available to Court for reference.

In discussion, it was acknowledged that the timelines were ambitious, but that there was confidence that they were achievable. External analysis of the University's systems was being undertaken in the short term, following which there would be clarity about moving forward. It was intended to begin work in the summer of 2020, as 2021 was a critical year in terms of infrastructure needs.

A question was asked about third party (particularly Cloud) provision of some services and whether this was a risk. Court noted in this context that the Cloud was being utilized to provide both capacity (e.g. where systems were failing) and flexibility in the face of emerging capabilities.

A comment was noted suggesting that the University should move completely to the Cloud, rather than having data centres; and expressing a concern that it might be overly complex to try and build on older systems. A question was asked about the budgets for the planned innovations including the Smart Campus, and about recent PC cluster purchases and how these fitted into the strategy; and about the linkage between the physical estate, the IT strategy, including lecture recording.

It was noted that the full implementation plan was not yet finalised and that, for example, with regard to lecture recording, further interaction was needed with the capital plan and the Learning & Teaching strategy. With regard to the purchase of PC clusters, these were markers only for the relatively short term, with for example the JMSL&TH being fully laptop-enabled rather than equipped with fixed PCs. With regard to the Cloud, it was considered that this gave both flexibility and scale, but it was not intended to move all University activity to it, so as not to be wholly committed to the Cloud and the associated costs: a 'mixed economy' was planned. The hybrid option in the strategy would allow this to occur.

With regard to the interaction of the capital plan and the IT strategy, the earlier briefing on the capital plan had indicated the importance of embedding IT costs in the capital plan. The significant IT costs outlined in the IT strategy would not all occur at a single time, though some would occur in the summer of 2020, but if the capital plan was approved then the associated IT costs would be included; and any major capital projects coming through to Court in 2021 would include IT costs. Were future developments to result in a change in IT requirements, then the pattern of expenditure on IT might also change.

In the context of ensuring that the IT strategy and associated financial planning was as robust as possible, it was agreed that the IPSC would be augmented to include two more appropriately qualified external members, and that it would report directly to Court in future. It was noted that it would be important to ensure that the existing governance structures for capital projects, including scrutiny by the Estates and Finance Committees, continued to apply and that they were not delayed by the new reporting structure. The timing of meetings including IPSC, EC and FC needed to be carefully considered. In this context it was noted

that the Finance Committee's role could not cover challenge on the cost-effectiveness of an IT project *per se*, since that Committee did not have the relevant expertise.

The addition of other external members to IPSC was welcomed by Professor Coton and Ms Ashworth.

It was agreed that the remit of IPSC would be reviewed to ensure it was appropriate going forward; Professor Coton would begin this process ahead of Court approving the finalised remit. It was further agreed that external candidates would be sought ahead of nominations being made to Court via the Nominations Committee, by email if required.

## **CRT/2019/30. Report from the University Secretary**

### *CRT 2019.30.1 Brexit and University Preparation*

Court had received regular updates over the past 3 years, with the situation being under regular review at the University in the lead-up to the end of January 2020 and beyond. The University had provided support to EU staff and students via a dedicated University website and meetings to assist with the associated bureaucracy of Brexit.

During the transition period the UK would remain a full member of Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020. The University would do everything it could to encourage continued exchanges of staff and students through the programmes and collaborations that these two initiatives provided. There would be lobbying of the UK Government to negotiate continued participation, or failing that to explore creating national replacement schemes.

### *CRT 2019.30.2 Coronavirus outbreak*

The matter had also been referred to earlier in the meeting.

The University community was being updated regularly and there was a dedicated email address for queries.

The University was in close contact with the public health authorities in Scotland and was monitoring the situation in China and elsewhere. A working group was meeting first thing each morning.

A contact email had been provided for anyone at the University who was concerned about the situation. A Facebook live broadcast had been held on 28 January with colleagues and students, including those from the University's Chinese community. There was a website with Q&As.

The possible implications for student recruitment for 2020/21 were being considered; this was a cross-sector concern.

### *CRT 2019.30.3 Sustainability/Climate Change*

At the last meeting, Court had received a paper, "*A Dear, Green Place*": *Towards a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the University*, with its key aspects highlighted, namely for the University to be carbon neutral by 2035, that there would be wide engagement across all stakeholders, and an emphasis on how the University was contributing to the global challenges around sustainability and climate change. Court's comments and support for the direction of travel had been sought. Dr Duncan's thanks were recorded to those who had provided comments.

The consultation had now been launched and it was hoped to engage as many people as possible, with events being arranged to discuss the topics and to raise awareness; consideration was also being given to appropriate interim targets for 2025 and 2030, and to reflecting on the role of offsetting in the strategy prior to 2035.

Regular meetings and actions (both internally at the University and more widely) were now occurring ahead of the COP26 event in Glasgow in November 2020, with Vice Principal Rachel Sandison leading on this for the University.

#### *CRT 2019.30.4 Personal Safety*

At the last meeting, Court members had been advised about the arrest of a man for a series of sexual assaults in Glasgow. The case had raised concerns about personal safety, especially of women. Since then, the Rector and the SRC President had met with representatives of Police Scotland and Police Scotland had agreed to sign an information-sharing protocol with the University.

#### *CRT 2019.30.5 Gender Based Violence*

In late 2019, universities and colleges in the west of Scotland had moved to tackle gender-based violence under the banner of Fearless Glasgow. The partnership had the backing of Police Scotland and the Scottish Government, as well as other specialist support agencies including Clyde Rape Crisis. It would help raise awareness of sexual violence. Fearless Glasgow would develop campaigns, share ideas, and improve access to help and information across all campuses, with the help of specialist groups.

Prompted by the SRC, the University was now planning a further campaign to raise awareness about appropriate behaviour and encourage reporting of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

It was agreed that staff induction should also incorporate details, so as to further raise awareness.

#### *CRT 2019.30.6 Disability Access*

At the last meeting, the Rector had referred to concerns from a potential student who was a wheelchair user, and from her family, about disability access in University buildings.

The Estates Committee had been asked to follow the matter up. Members of Court noted the update provided, which included details of progress being made.

The Director of Student and Academic Services had communicated with the mother of the prospective student and was currently expecting further input on the latter's needs.

In discussion, a question was asked about co-ordination between services in terms of accessibility between, and not just within, buildings, for example involving the Room Bookings service in discussions. It was confirmed that there was good communication between the SMG's Disability Champion, the Disability Service and timetabling/room bookings, although it was noted this was in the context of intense pressure for space and complicated timetabling. The new JMSL&TH would help with these issues.

#### *CRT 2019.30.7 Industrial Action*

Following the days of strike action in November and December last year, there was currently

a period of 'working to contract' (e.g. declining voluntary tasks) to 29 April 2020.

UCU had called the industrial action about the 2019 pay settlement for staff and concerns over casualisation, equality and workloads; the union was also concerned about increases in the contribution employees made towards their pensions. The 2019 pay settlement in August 2019 had been an uplift of 1.8% but UCU had called for at least 6%; and the union had argued that staff should not have to pay a 0.8% increase in pension contributions.

Some progress had been made in national negotiations on the non-pay issues and also on the future of the pension scheme, but progress around pay and pension contributions had not been made. The University had received notification that the UCU's HE Committee would not put the revised proposals on non-pay issues to its members and had called for a further 14 days of strike action, beginning on 20 February over four weeks to 13 March.

New talks were scheduled to begin shortly with regard to the 2020/21 pay settlement.

#### *CRT 2019.30.8 Disinvestment petition*

At the last meeting, Court had heard that the University had been approached by a coalition of student groups calling on the University to disinvest in companies involved in the arms trade/defence sector. Court had supported the establishment of a working group to consider this issue and to report back to Court via Finance Committee. The group was meeting and would continue to liaise with relevant groups ahead of reporting back later in the spring.

In discussion, the Rector asked about how long the process would take, since for him this was a moral issue. It had taken over 100 years for the University to address its role in the slave trade, and the Rector was looking for faster action in relation to the current matter. He considered there was a reputational issue for the University, including its association with COP26. Dr Duncan advised that the group had met, and had also met with students to ascertain their questions for the fund managers; further work was ongoing with fund managers to look at options. An interim report was scheduled for the April Court meeting, with a further report in June.

#### *CRT 2019.30.9 Organisational Change Governance Group – Small Animal Hospital*

At the October meeting, Court had heard that the OCGG had met to discuss proposals relating to the Small Animal Hospital, arising from changes in the market for veterinary referrals and the need to retain learning opportunities for vet students. In December, Court had approved development of the preferred option of setting up a wholly-owned subsidiary company to manage the Small Animal Hospital. The work was ongoing, with the unions involved in consultation.

#### *CRT 2019.30.10 Annual Court Self-Assessment and Convener appraisal*

As had been usual in previous years, a questionnaire for Court self-assessment/feedback on performance would be circulated. The Court Governance Working Group would consider the outcomes of this to ensure Court was addressing its responsibilities in terms of good governance. There would be a report to Court at a future meeting.

The Convener left the room for the next item. Court agreed that the Chancellor's Assessor, Ronnie Mercer, would undertake the appraisal of the Convener's performance.

*CRT 2019.30.11 Committee appointments*

*Finance Committee*

Court approved a Nominations Committee recommendation that Mr Benny Higgins be appointed to the Finance Committee, as an additional co-opted/external member, aimed at further strengthening the skills and experience set on the Committee. The appointment would be from 1 March 2020 for 4 years in the first instance.

*Remuneration Committee*

Court approved a Nominations Committee recommendation for the reappointment of Mr Rob Goward, a co-opted (non-Court) member of the Remuneration Committee, for a further four years to March 2024.

*CRT 2019.30.12 Senior Appointment – Director of Estates*

Mr Ian Campbell had been appointed to replace Ann Allen as Director of Estates with effect from the end of April 2020.

*CRT 2019.30.13 Summary of Convener's Business*

Court noted a summary of activities undertaken by the Convener since the last meeting.

*CRT 2019.30.14 Heads of School Appointments*

College of Science & Engineering

Professor Simon Gay had been appointed as Head of the School of Computing Science for 4 years from 1 August 2020.

Professor David Ireland had been appointed as Head of the School of Physics & Astronomy for 4 years from 1 August 2020.

**CRT/2019/31. Student and Rector's Matters, including: Rector's Report; Students' Representative Council Annual Report and SRC President update; SEC Report**

*CRT/2019/31.1 Rector's Report*

*CRT/2019/31.1.1 Security*

The Rector reported that following the cases of sexual assault that had occurred in the west end before Christmas, the matter having been discussed at the December meeting of Court, he had met with the Assistant Chief Constable at Police Scotland. The Rector had been content with the operational reasons, connected to the case being 'live', that had been given about why more information had not been shared with the community at the time. The Rector did however still have some concerns. He noted that there had been a new protocol agreed between the University (including Security), the Student bodies and the Police. The Police were to undertake a security review/audit, which the Rector had urged them to start shortly; the Rector encouraged the University to engage with this and to share information with the student bodies. The Rector understood that there would be cost issues, but felt that student and staff safety was paramount.

In discussion, it was noted that under the new protocol, and subject to any 'live case' restrictions, the Police would share information and have a closer relationship with the

University, were there any similar cases in future. It was also noted that there was a balance to be struck, and that the relationship was based on sharing information on risks that were ascertained as real.

The University Secretary advised that the University would follow up with the Police with regard to the security audit.

#### *CRT/2019/31.1.2 Janitorial Staff Pay*

The Rector advised that he had met with staff over the past three years and had met janitorial staff earlier in the day. He considered that these staff had a strong impact on students, since they were often the first people that students encountered; yet these staff had been waiting years for a decision about regrading. The Rector added that the janitorial staff he had met had also made allegations of bullying and harassment.

In response, the University Secretary guaranteed that the janitorial grading matter would be addressed by the end of March. With regard to the reference to bullying and harassment claims, the University's policy was one of zero tolerance; the University Secretary asked the Rector to urge anyone with a claim to speak to the E&DU, the Director of HR or himself.

#### *CRT/2019/31.1.3 Rector's Farewell*

The Rector recalled that he had come to the University in 1986, and could never have predicted he would become Rector, which had been a great honour. He recalled hearing Jimmy Reid give his own address as Rector. He felt that he had not been able to achieve everything that he had wanted to, but that it had been a tremendous experience and an honour. The Rector highlighted accommodation issues, spiralling debt and mental health as major ongoing areas of concern for students. He referred to the £1bn investment in the University but recorded a note of caution that buildings could not be a substitute for people: staff and students were the heart and soul of the University; the University could not allow education to be treated as a business nor students as a cash cow; the key should be education and equipping people for life.

The Rector selected one highlight of his time in the role, which was the University's treatment of Katie Allan's parents, when he had felt great pride in the University.

The Rector recorded his thanks to the Principal, University Secretary, Court, the SRC and the Convener of Court.

The Convener of Court thanked the Rector, noting that Court had valued the issues he had brought to meetings and that students and staff around the University had benefitted from his work.

The SRC President thanked the Rector for his services to students over the past three years. He asked that the SRC be included in any further discussions that the Rector might have with Police Scotland.

The University Secretary thanked the Rector for all his work, noting that while relationships with the University had not always been easy, the Rector's commitment to students and staff had been total. Dr Duncan commended the Rector's recent Jimmy Reid lecture.

#### *CRT/2019/31.2 Students' Representative Council Annual Report and SRC President Update*

Court received a presentation from Scott Kirby, SRC President, providing an overview of the SRC's work over the previous year, an update on initiatives, activities and priorities in the current academic year, including academic engagement and representation, student support, volunteering and clubs & societies, SRC/University joint initiatives and current and future challenges.

Mr Kirby summarised highlights from the 2018/19 year, which included:

- influencing University decision-making, the ELIR report having been extremely positive about the strong and productive relationship between GUSRC and the University;
- student volunteering, with a particular focus on civic engagement, assisting students to bridge the gap between the University and some of the communities it served, with increased financial support from the University having enabled the SRC to provide many more students with the opportunity to find and pursue new interests whilst developing themselves as individuals;
- the establishment of the Student Experience Committee, jointly chaired by the SRC President and University Chief Operating Officer and reporting to Court;
- work in the area of mental health, including Peer Support training, where a further £22,000 award from the National Lottery had enabled the SRC to roll out the third iteration of our successful Mind Your Mate programme during 2018/2019;
- representation, with 800 class representatives trained and where an independent survey had reported very high percentages of positive feedback about action agreed or taken as a result of representatives' input and about development of communication skills as a result of the role;
- the Rent Guarantor scheme, where following an approach from GUSRC, the University had agreed to establish a Rent Guarantor scheme for International Students and members of vulnerable groups;
- the 'It Stops Now!' initiative, in which the SRC had played a key role, together with Rape Crisis Scotland;
- The International Weekend which had been attended by c1000 people.
- promotion of the University through the SRC's 'historical tours' of the University, which continued to grow in popularity.

Looking forward, the SRC would be working with the University to develop a new University strategic plan, and liaising with the WCGT team in its work. Support for initiatives around Gender Based Violence would continue. The representative system for PGRs would continue to be developed, as would training and development opportunities for students, in particular connected to Graduate Attributes. The SRC would continue to campaign with the University to retain the Erasmus+ opportunities. There would be work done on sustainability, free travel and in relation to private accommodation issues. There were challenges associated with the campus expansion and the increased numbers of students, particularly PGT, that would be kept under close watch. The international student experience was not always positive in the context of the University's rapid expansion and, as a service provider, the SRC was very alert to this, in particular around more effective integration of international students. A table of figures of HEI student numbers and levels of funding provided for student services was presented to Court.

In discussion, it was noted that there were four student bodies at the University but that each provided a distinct offering; clubs and societies were also supported by the SRC; Glasgow excelled in the UK in this area, with the highest involvement. The SRC President considered that these provided a unique and beneficial experience for students, but that there was perceived underfunding of the student bodies, which impacted on their ability to deliver services due to funding constraints; given the projections for increases in student numbers over the next few years, this matter should be considered and more investment should be provided. With regard to what would be provided if additional resource were forthcoming, Court heard that funds would be spent on areas including refurbishment, leadership development, wellbeing, and helping clubs and societies.

With regard to the table of figures provided, it was requested that further work be done on the detail, so that all income be reflected and like-for-like comparisons be made across the

various HEIs and services listed, to provide as accurate as possible a reflection of provision. Comments were noted that the table as presented required some caution since the details included in it were not necessarily comparable; Mr Kirby acknowledged that the table was not like for like but was presented in order to provide context.

Court's thanks to Mr Kirby for the presentation, and to the SRC for its work, were recorded.

### *CRT/2019/31.3 Student Experience Committee Report*

The Student Parents Policy had been developed during 2017-18 by the Student Support and Development Committee (SSDC) in consultation with the SRC and the Chief Advisers Sub-Committee, following a survey of student parents conducted by the SRC. The policy focused on the responsibilities of being a parent or guardian and the impact on study-related matters, with the aim of ensuring consistency of experience for student parents, where possible. It had been approved by SSDC's successor, the Student Experience Committee, in April 2018, and also reported to the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee (EDSC) in June 2018. EDSC had welcomed the policy, although it had been noted that the IT and GDPR requirements surrounding the secure capture of a parental declaration within the University's MyCampus system needed to be implemented. Later, the Senate Office had agreed with the SRC that the policy should be published and operated as far as possible with the system development pending. The policy was now approved by Court.

Court noted the report of the Student Experience Committee (SEC) Away Day held in December 2019, which had considered the following topics in relation to the student experience: the new University Strategy; Climate Emergency and Sustainability; the contribution of the four student bodies; Sport and Exercise; and the SEC Action Plan.

## **CRT/2019/32. Reports of Court Committees**

### *CRT/2019/32.1. Finance Committee*

#### *CRT/2019/32.1.1 Capital Plan review*

The Committee had received an oral summary of the outcomes of a joint Finance and Estates Committee Workshop held in the morning of 28 January. The workshop had received presentations and papers relating to the capital plan update, including: details of the Gleeds review of the plan, which had provided an independent view of the basis on which costs had been established; the latest position on committed and 'Should do' major capital projects, including timeline and cost outlook, risks and contingency, and in the latter case the work required to finalise estimates; routine capital works including rationale and requirement, annual spend pattern and forward cost estimates, risks and contingency and work required to finalise estimates; and detail on the IT-related capital investment programme as well as the vision for use of technology across the institution. Possible future capital projects had also been covered in the workshop, including rationale and prioritisation considerations, cost estimates, and a summary of actions and considerations for cashflow.

A cashflow and affordability paper had been provided, outlining operational revenues and expense, and including cash flow assumptions, cash flow scenarios and projections, including sensitivities, and potential additional sources of finance. The affordability analysis had included an analysis of potential borrowing, including approaches to debt repayment and the extent of potential additional debt requirement.

It had been agreed that a comprehensive paper capturing all of the important expenditure and funding proposals would be provided to Court in for the present meeting. This had been received earlier in the meeting.

*CRT/2019/32.1.3 Maintenance in Student Residences*

The Committee had received and approved a paper requesting additional expenditure to deliver planned and additional maintenance works in student residences.

*CRT/2019/32.1.5 CapEx Applications*

The Committee had approved applications relating to: Berkeley Square Pavilion 3 Staff Relocations (External Relations) £1.2m; Berkeley Square Pavilion 4 Staff Relocations (SPSHU) £0.495m; CoSE Equipment associated to ERC Consolidator Grant Application £0.646m; CoSE Support NERC Science £0.967m; MVLS Purchase of Irradiation Platform £1m; and MVLS Purchase of MEG Scanner £1.5m.

The Committee had also approved a CapEx IT application between meetings in late November 2019, relating to Core Network Provision Phase 1; this had been approved by the CapEx Committee on 20 November (£1.071m) and circulated to the Finance Committee shortly thereafter.

*CRT/2019/32.1.6 Financial reports*

Court noted an overview of performance as at 31 December 2019.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2019/32.2 Estates Committee*

*CRT/2019/32.2.1 Capital Plan*

The Committee had received an update on the capital plan review. Challenges of new opportunities, cost increase and project development had been discussed. The balance of proposed expenditure between new-build, refurbishment of the existing estates, maintenance and investment in the digital infrastructure had been noted. Key next steps had included remodelling income and expenditure assumptions; a costed technology strategy and establishing a detailed maintenance budget balancing risks and costs. A cost management review by Gleeds had been presented and the recommendations discussed.

*CRT/2019/32.2.2 Accessibility*

A paper detailing work being done to address accessibility across the estate had been received. This had arisen following discussion at Court in December, the Committee noting that the University's focus on 'People, Place, Purpose' should include an estate which was accessible. This was in addition to legal requirements to ensure that where possible all buildings were accessible. As a result of this, it was important that accessibility and inclusion were key considerations on both the existing estate and the design of the new buildings. This requirement for an accessible estate was captured within the Estates Design Guide, in which it was stated that the University 'is committed to promoting and implementing equality of opportunity in the learning, teaching, research and working environments.' Through this, the University sought design solutions which reflected its aspiration for a fully inclusive campus. This included the mental health and wellbeing of campus users.

The Committee had acknowledged that all design teams were expected to adhere to the existing Design Guide document. It has also been noted that the University had an Accessibility Design Champion who ensured that all building design addressed accessibility. Work would be done with the Champion to find appropriate solutions. The Committee had agreed that further work should be done with Disability Services to ensure Accessibility

*CRT/2019/32.2.4 CapEx applications*

The Committee had approved CapEx applications relating to: Berkeley Square Pavilion 3 Staff Relocations (External Relations) £1.2m; Berkeley Square Pavilion 4 Staff Relocations (SPSHU) £0.495m; CoSE Support NERC Science £0.967m; CoSE Equipment associated to ERC Consolidator Grant Application £0.646m; MVLS Purchase of Irradiation Platform 1m; and MVLS Purchase of MEG Scanner £1.5m.

*CRT/2019/32.3 HR Committee*

The Committee had received an update from the Executive Director of Human Resources on the development of the People and Organisational Development Strategy, summarising identified challenges and opportunities and the anticipated priorities as part of the wider University strategy for 2020-2025. The Committee had noted: the latest position on industrial action and the ongoing dispute around pay and pensions, an update on the latest USS pension developments and an overview of progress around the University's Engagement Action Plan and in particular the recently held SMG visibility events. The Deputy Director of Human Resources had presented an update on the delivery of the HR Transformation Project as the mechanism through which the ambitions of the People and Organisational Development Strategy would be realised. The Committee had received details on Pay, Performance and Reward (including Performance and Development Review - PDR), noting the challenges surrounding the 2019 PDR exercise and plans to design an improved in-house system for the 2020 round. The Committee had received a copy of the minutes from the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee's November meeting.

The Committee had also looked at matters relating to an audit report concerning SCENE; the Audit & Risk Committee would also be updated on this at its March meeting.

Minutes of the JCCN meeting held on in October 2019 were provided for Court's information.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2019/32.4 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee*

At its meeting in December, the Committee had received: updates on meetings with onsite contractors, and on possible centralisation of PAT testing. The Committee had received a briefing on risk management. The Committee had covered its usual range of business in reviewing standard reports on occupational health activities, audit updates and employee counselling. The Committee had approved the Asbestos Policy. Updates on Fire safety matters, personal safety and on Traffic Management had been noted and discussed.

The report was noted.

**CRT/2019/33. Communications from Meetings of Senate held on 10 December 2019 and 6 February 2020**

At its December 2019 meeting, Senate had received updates on: the 2020-25 University Strategy, the final draft of which would be presented to the University Court in June 2020; the progress of the World-Changing Glasgow Transformation (WCGT) projects; USS Pensions; and the recent industrial action. Senate had received a summary of the Muscatelli report, which had focused on how Scotland's universities could improve their engagement with industry and boost their contribution to economic growth. Senate had received details about

actions taken in relation to fire safety at student accommodation, following a fire at a student residence in England. Senate had received details on acceptances from nominees for honorary degrees.

At its February 2020 meeting, Senate had received: a summary of the University Library's Annual Report; the report was commended to Court, which would be provided with a copy. Senate had received an update on Brexit implications in terms of tuition fees, research and immigration matters that affected the University; information on actions being taken with regard to the coronavirus outbreak; and an update on industrial action. Senate had received details on further acceptances from nominees for honorary degrees.

The communications from Senate were noted.

**CRT/2019/34. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**CRT/2019/35. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Court will be held on Wednesday 15 April 2020 at 1pm in the Rutherford McCowan Building, Dumfries Campus. [amended to e-meeting]