



## Court

### Minute of Meeting held on Tuesday 23 June 2020 by Zoom

#### **Present:**

Cllr Susan Aitken Glasgow City Council Assessor, Ms Teresa Baños SRC Assessor on Court, Mr Graeme Bissett Co-opted Member, Ms Heather Cousins Co-opted Member, Mr David Finlayson Co-opted Member, Professor Carl Goodyear Elected Academic Staff Member, Professor Nick Hill 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, Dr Ken Sutherland Co-opted Member, Ms Lesley Sutherland General Council Assessor, Dr Bethan Wood Elected Academic Staff Member

#### **Attending:**

Mr Liam Brady (SRC President Elect, Observing) Mr Gregor Caldwell (Group Financial Controller), Professor Frank Coton (Vice-Principal Academic Planning & Technological Innovation), Dr David Duncan (Chief Operating Officer [COO] & University Secretary), Mr Robert Fraser (Director of Finance), Ms Amber Higgins (Executive Officer and Clerk to Court), Professor Neal Juster (Senior Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Jill Morrison (Vice-Principal & Clerk of Senate), Professor Chris Pearce (Vice Principal Research).

#### **Apologies:**

Dr Craig Daly Trade Union Nominee

#### **CRT/2019/47. Announcements**

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.

Court was reminded that papers and business were confidential.

#### **CRT/2019/48. Minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 15 April 2020**

The minutes were approved following minor modification to CRT/2019/44 Senate Matters.

#### **CRT/2019/49. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **CRT/2019/50. Covid-19/Coronavirus Update and Planning**

Court received an update from the Principal on the current planning and progress made on the reopening of the campus. The Principal drew particular attention to the following:

- Workstreams in key areas continued to meet regularly and Health and Safety was the key consideration to all decisions made;
- Spring 2020 examination diet with more than 1,000 exams had been held over a 4-week period; along-side this the introduction of a No Detriment Policy had ensured that no student was disadvantaged due to the pandemic;
- Plans were currently being made to hold virtual celebrations for the graduating students, with the students being offered an opportunity to come back to campus in 2021 for a graduation-style event;
- The introduction of a University Roadmap with a working group specifically preparing for the return to campus. A detailed campus management plan had been published together with shorter guides aimed at staff, students, managers, researchers and homeworkers;
- Provisional terms had now been agreed with the main construction partner regarding the cost of the shutdown of construction sites ordered by the Scottish Government in response to Covid-19. Construction work resumed on most building sites on 15 June;
- Weekly communications to staff and occasional Q&A sessions had been broadcast via FaceBook. The Vice Principal for Research had organised special Q&A sessions for the research community;
- At the start of the 2020/21 academic year, the large majority of courses would start on 21 September with some taught postgraduate programmes beginning in November and January.

During the discussion it was noted that the University was aware that the ongoing situation would be having an adverse effect on staff and students and additional hardship funds had been put in place to support students who faced financial difficulties as a consequence of the pandemic. Staff would also be fully supported as they returned to campus with a specific Moodle Course for staff to complete prior to being allowed back on to campus which detailed all the Health and Safety steps that had been put in place.

Court thanked staff and recognised all of the hard work that had been undertaken during the pandemic to keep the University running during unprecedented times. It was also noted that key staff would be written to and thanked for their contribution and it was agreed that Court's gratitude would also be recorded in the letters.

### **CRT/2019/51 University KPIs**

Court received a presentation from Professor Neal Juster, Senior Vice Principal on the University's Key Performance Indicators – Paper 5. This would be the final report on performance contained in the 2015-20 Strategic Plan *Inspiring People: Changing the World*, and that the new strategic plan would be presented to Court in December 2020. The Senior Vice Principal drew Court's attention to the following:

- 11 KPI's had achieved their respective targets which included Research Output Quality, Service Delivery, Cash Generation, International Student FTE, Mobility,

Carbon Footprint and Widening Access (MD0-40), with a number of areas surpassing the target set;

- 4 KPI's had fallen just short of their target but had shown good improvement over the last 5 years – Gender Equality (Senior Staff), HESA Knowledge Exchange, Income/m2, and Research Income/R&T;
- 4 KPI's had failed to reach their respective 2020 targets – Under Graduate satisfaction was derived from the NSS scores, Assessment and Feedback which had a direct impact on the University's position in the domestic leagues, Under Graduate Progression had declined year on year and was at a five year low, and the % of staff holding Awards which remained significantly short of the original target.

During the discussion it was noted that Assessment and Feedback (AF) satisfaction had dropped from 69.3% to 66.8%, and that although there had been a sector-wide decrease, concerns were raised that this was still an area of concern despite the World Changing Glasgow Transformation Project initiative. It was noted that AF was fragmented across the University and that there was some correlation with areas that were growing quickly. However, it was hoped that as the project progressed it would significantly improve the systems and processes that support assessment and feedback.

The University's position in both domestic and international league tables was also noted and was seen to be a key indicator for student recruitment. Whilst the University remained in the top 20 for the three main domestic league tables, the University had dropped in rank in both tables released this year (QS and Complete), and it was noted that this could have an impact on international student support and scholarships.

Court noted that although the University had performed very well over the strategic cycle, many of the KPI's that had been selected in 2015 to measure performance had lost currency, and it was recommended that the next set of KPI's should include both quantitative and qualitative measures. Key areas to cover would be student experience, research, civic engagement, staff satisfaction, reputation, and financial sustainability. Court thanked the Senior Vice Principal for his presentation.

## **CRT/2019/52 Budget 2020/21 and Financial Forecasts**

**FOI Exempt/Commercially confidential**

## **CRT/2019/53. Report from the Principal**

Court received the report from the Principal – Paper 7 and the following areas were noted:

- Following the pandemic consultation sessions were taking place in relation to the Strategic Plan and would form a key part of the Court strategy day in September. The Strategy would likely be for 2 years and then would be reviewed rather than the usual 5 years. The strategy would then be submitted to Court in December 2020;
- The final allocation of SFC funding had now been published, with an overall increase of 2.7% for teaching, research and innovation. Alongside this an allocation of £15.25m had been made to the University as part of the Scottish Government one-off fund of £75m;

- In light of the COVID-19 crisis, an SFC review had been commissioned by Richard Lochhead, Minister for Further Education, Universities and Science in Scotland. The initial stage would report in August;
- UK Government had announced a package of stabilization measures for HEI's, but this would not increase funding to the Scottish block grant. The UK Government had re-confirmed that HEI's were eligible to apply for COVID Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS);
- REF 2021 had been put on hold due to the current pandemic but a new submission date was due to be announced shortly.

Court also noted that the Benny Higgins Economic Recovery Report, which had been commissioned by the Scottish Government had recently announced its recommendations. The impact of the recommendations would be evaluated in due course. During discussion it was also noted EU funding changes for students studying in the UK were due to be announced shortly; this would impact on students beyond 2021. The Principal reported that a number of positions within SMG were currently being advertised and that Court would be kept informed of the progress of the appointments. Court thanked the Principal for his update.

#### **CRT/2019/54. Annual Report on Research and KPIs**

Court received a presentation from Professor Chris Pearce, Vice Principal (Research) on the Annual Report on Research and KPI's. The Vice Principal drew Court's attention to the following:

- The University currently had approx. 5,000 researchers and around 4,000 active grants with 35% UKRI, 23% charities and 9% EU funded;
- Sector changes included the impact of the external environment;
- Implications of Covid-19 – opportunity for the University to shine in areas of strength;
- A new research strategy was being drafted and would have Collaboration, Creativity and Careers as key area;
- UofG's Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) had risen from 10<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> in the Russell Group, with a FWCI now similar to Edinburgh and Harvard Universities;
- REF 2021 Impact – all 139 individual case studies align with at least one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The three main UN SDG for the University are People, Planet, Prosperity;
- Approx 89% of the University's outputs are authored collaboratively, with a 10% growth in international collaborations since 2014;
- The University was leading the Scottish Covid-19 response – had set up the Lighthouse Lab, was supporting the Oxford vaccine trial, and was a key part of the Scottish Covid-19 Response Consortium.

During the discussion Court noted that a number of Covid-19 mitigating actions had been put in place such as – furloughing staff, redeployment of fixed term staff, mitigation and financial support for PGRs, live Q&A sessions, along with guidance and planning for restarting research. Court welcomed the support given to all the research staff affected.

Court also noted that the REF2021 submission had been delayed to 31 March 2021, and that out of 141 potential case studies in the pipeline, all except 12 (~8.5%) had external research

funding: 6 in the College of Social Sciences and 6 in the College of Arts. External funding for research included: UKRI funding councils (including Innovate UK), EU/international funding schemes, UK governments, industry, charities, NHS and any other funding bodies such as Wellcome Trust or the British Academy.

Court thanked the Vice Principal (Research) for his update.

### **CRT/2019/55. Report from the University Secretary**

Court noted the report from the University Secretary - Paper 9. The following areas were discussed in further detail by Court.

#### *CRT 2019.55.1 Black Lives Matter*

In response to Black Lives Matters the University had put out several messages across its social media channels stating that the University was appalled at the brutal killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. The University stood together with the SRC and the entire UofG community in condemning all forms of racism and discrimination. It was noted that the Principal had asked the Race Equality Group co-chaired by Vice Principal Bonnie Dean and Professor Satnam Virdee to identify additional actions that the University might undertake in response to the situation. The group's recommendations would then go to the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee for consideration. The University's institutional approach was summarised in the following bullet points.

The University of Glasgow:

- Repudiates racism and racial discrimination of all kinds
- Will strive to become a more welcoming place for prospective staff and students from BAME backgrounds
- Is committed to racial equality for BAME staff and students
- Supports refugees as students, staff and members of the wider community
- Is implementing a programme of work in recognition of UofG's relationship with historical slavery
- Works with representative groups and external agencies to address racial injustice, wherever it is found
- Seeks to inform the wider debate in society about racism and racial equality
- Will use its academic expertise to promote race equality worldwide
- Will forge enduring partnerships with universities and other bodies in the Global South
- Welcomes constructive criticism and accepts the need for change

It was also noted that at the same time, the Race Equality Group was working on a response to the December 2019 EHRC report into racial harassment in universities. Member's attention was also drawn to the wider efforts by SFC and EHRC to strengthen the public sector equality duty following the signing of an MoU between the two bodies in March.

#### *CRT 2019.55.2 Disinvestment petition*

Court received a report from the Working Group (WG) which had been established with Gavin Stewart as chair following the submission of a petition from the Glasgow University Arms Divestment Coalition (GUADC) in December 2019. The petition demanded that the University divest from companies engaged in the arms trade on the basis that it was inconsistent with

the University's Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) policy. Gavin Stewart reported that as part of the process the WG had consulted with the investment managers for the endowments and met with representatives from the student coalition.

The WG noted that the petition raised complex issues and that it was very difficult to see them in isolation. Although the companies were involved in the arms trade, they were also involved in supplying the UK defence forces. Many of the companies were also heavily involved in the general engineering and avionics sectors. The companies operated within the legal framework of the UK and UN treaties and within export licences issued by the UK government.

While recognising the importance of the issues raised by the coalition, the WG recommended that Court should not agree to the demands set out in the petition. However, the WG recommended that the University should now ban investment in companies which produced weapons that contravened international treaties and agreements. The WG also recommended that the University should write to the UK Government making the case that licences should not be issued for the export of defence materiel to countries with an unacceptable human rights record.

Court noted that members had received emails from students in support of the petition and highlighting their concerns. The SRC Assessor added that this was an important issue to students and that the University should be taking a moral stance on investment in companies with a link to the arms trade. The SRC President also raised concerns about the WG outcomes and felt that the recommendations should go further, as he felt the current policy was incompatible with the University policy and support for asylum seekers. There was also concern that the recommendations did not address the point raised in the petition that there could be a reputational impact if Court did not accede to the demands.

It was reported that around 2% of endowment fund investments were currently held in the companies listed. Court also noted that some of the companies named in the petition had long-standing links with the University as funders of research.

Court members noted that there were many challenges around investments and divestment campaigns, and this was an area that many funds were grappling with at present. Many large funds were now using their size and influence to become more vocal and influence companies they might invest in, taking a more activist position. Whilst it was key for the University to engage with the UK government, it was noted that the University could also write to the companies listed in the petition to point out that whilst the work they undertake might not be illegal in terms of UK Government regulation, concerns have been raised by the student body about particular aspects. It was noted that this approach had worked in the gas and oil sector with pension funds taking more of a vocal stance; this had led to the sector moving away from dependency on fossil fuels and looking at more sustainable energy sources.

Following discussion Court agreed to the recommendations as outlined by WG, firstly not to support the petition and also as follows;

- 1) A formal ban on investment in any company that contravenes international / UN treaties related to the arms trade where the UK is signatory to such treaties. This will cover both current treaties and any future ones. (The current treaties this would cover are set out in the main report).
- 2) The University of Glasgow to write to the UK government to challenge the inconsistency between their granting of export licences to firms where the destination countries are ones the government itself classes as being 'at risk' of human rights abuses.

Court further agreed that the University should write to the companies raising these concerns and urging the companies to consider whether their activities were fully compatible with their

publicly stated values.

The outcome of the latter activity would be reported back to Court in early 2021.

### *CRT 2019.55.3 Committee Remit and Appointments*

#### *Court Co-opted Members*

Court noted that Elspeth Orcharton's term on Court was due to end on 31 October 2020. Elspeth had currently served for 4 years and was therefore eligible to continue for a further 4 years.

The Nominations Committee had recommended that Elspeth be reappointed for a further 4 years from 1 November 2020. Court approved the nomination.

#### *Information Policy and Strategy Committee IPSC*

At the April meeting of Court, the remit and membership was agreed and further agreement was now being sought from Court for an amendment to the membership to include an additional lay member. Court approved the change to the membership.

The Nominations Committee recommended the appointment of Kenny Robertson and Andrew Wykes as lay members for 4 years from September 2020 on IPCS. Court approved the nominations.

During the discussion concerns were raised about the gender balance and BAME breakdown on Court Committees. Court agreed that the Nominations Committee should look at ways to target specific groups more efficiently to increase diversity on Court Committees.

### *CRT 2019.55.4 Rectorial Election 2020*

Court noted that this had been due to take place in March 2020 but had now been postponed until early 2021 so that a full-scale election campaign could take place. There will be a vacancy on Court until a new Rector is elected.

### *CRT 2019.55.5 Directors of Research Institutes and Heads of School Appointments*

Court noted the following changes in the College of Science and Engineering:

#### *School of Computing Science*

Professor Simon Gay, would now take up post as Head of the School of Computing Science for four years from 1 June 2020 instead of 1 August 2020 due to the earlier departure of the previous incumbent.

#### *School of Chemistry*

Professor Justin Hargreaves had been appointed Head of the School of Chemistry from 1 January 2021 for a period of 4 years.

### **CRT/2019/56. Student Matters, including: SEC Report; SRC President update**

The SRC President highlighted that a working group had been established to look at the student experience in 2020/21, as it was acknowledged that there was a risk that there could be a detrimental impact from Covid-19, with a blended learning model for academic session 2020/21 and reduced social interaction on campus. Student wellbeing was also being closely looked at, with a case for support being put forward, given the different needs of the student population in the next academic year.

## **CRT/2019/57. Reports of Court Committees**

### *CRT/2019/57.1. Finance Committee*

#### **FOI Exempt/Commercially confidential**

##### *CRT/2019/57.1.1 Anti Bribery and Corruption Policy*

The Committee had received the amended policy and were content with the revised changes.

Court approved the Anti Bribery and Corruption Policy.

##### *CRT/2019/57.1.2 CapEx Applications*

The Committee had received three capital expenditure requests. It was also noted that the Western/Church Street repairs would proceed to prevent further damage occurring. The Committee had agreed to approve the two Capex projects in relation to the Diffractometer and Western/Church Street repairs. The Capex in relation to NIIP Consultancy and PM Fees was also approved following the meeting.

The report was noted.

### *CRT/2019/57.2 Estates Committee*

#### *CRT/2019/57.2.1 Capital Plan*

#### **FOI Exempt/Commercially confidential**

##### *CRT/2019/57.2.2 CapEx applications*

The Committee had approved CapEx applications relating to: Western/Church Street Innovation/Tennent Institute refurbishment, £0.50million; COSE application for bespoke X-Ray diffractometer in the sum of £0.617million.

### *CRT/2019/57.3 IPSC*

The Committee noted that all recommendations were caveated due to potential changes in the quantum and profile of the IT financial plan, with University Court assessing financial scenarios. The Committee had agreed that the Enterprise Integration programme would be re-scaled for essential items to support Assessment and Feedback and Smart Campus. The Virtual Learning Environment Digital Accessibility Business Case (£47K) essential to online teaching had been approved subject to budget assignment from University Services. The Network Infrastructure Investment Program (NIIP) CapEx Application was noted (later approved by CapEx and the Finance Committee).

The Committee noted the operational performance of IT services during Covid-19, including: risk and impact assessment on each service and actions to bolster; Virtual Learning Environment Moodle & Examinations; a new laptop loan service; the quick creation of Glasgow Anywhere by Information Services staff; and Covid-19 LightHouse Lab Glasgow partnership working.

The report was noted.

### *CRT/2019/57.4 Audit & Risk Committee*

The Committee received internal audit reports on: Student Mobility and PGR Scholarships and Discounts. The Committee agreed the 2020/21 internal audit plan; approved an update to the Risk management policy and received the University Risk Register which was still to be updated in light of Covid-19. The Committee approved the proposed External Audit approach

for the year to 31 July 2020. The Committee received an update on Implementation of Outstanding Recommendations from prior internal audits. The University Risk Register would come to the September meeting of Court.

The report was noted.

#### *CRT/2019/57.5 HR Committee*

The Committee received an update from the Executive Director of Human Resources on activity to manage the ongoing organisational impact of COVID-19 and the current medium-term priorities including an overview of key communications, the University's use of the Government's Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme, plans for the gradual return to Campus and resulting impacts relating to people and organisational change. The Committee received an overview from the Vice Principal for Research on the strategic priorities of the Research and Innovation Strategy 2020-2025 including the three pillars of collaboration, creativity and careers and the important underpinning role played by the People and Organisational Development function.

The Committee received an update from the Executive Director of Human Resources on headline items including the latest position on the development of both the University and the People and Organisational Development strategies, progress on industrial action and the ongoing dispute around pay and pensions, an update on the latest USS pension developments, changes relating to UKVI post-brexite and the impact of COVID19 on annual Pay, Performance and Reward processes.

The Committee received an overview of the institutional application for Athena Swan Silver level award. The Committee received an update from the Director of Organisational Development on the emerging Organisational Development Strategy, the evolution of a new set of university values and plans to review the University's approach to employee engagement.

The minutes for the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee and JNCC were noted by Court.

The report was noted.

#### *CRT/2019/57.6 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee*

At its meeting in May, the Committee had covered its usual range of business in reviewing standard reports on occupational health activities, audit updates, accident reporting and employee counselling.

The Committee had heard an update on the safety of staff on campus from the Covid-19 task group. The Committee noted that a Campus Recovery Plan would be finalised with the aim of a gradual reopening of campus in line with all public health and social distancing legislation. The Committee noted that a Moodle induction course would be made available to all staff and would be required to be completed prior to being allowed back on campus. The Committee also noted that separate guides were being prepared for staff, students, line managers and staff working from home.

Dr Duncan acknowledged the work of colleagues in Health, Safety and Wellbeing in the current situation, in particular the liaison with the Health and Safety Executive and in ensuring that health and safety was at the forefront of the University's actions and plans.

The report was noted.

#### **CRT/2019/58. Senate Matters**

The Clerk of Senate referred to the discussion at the Court meeting in April when it had been agreed to reinstate the June meeting of Senate, this had taken place on 4 June 2020.

Court noted that Rachel Sandison, Vice Principal (External Relations) had informed Senate

that in light of the likely impact of Covid-19 on teaching during 2020-21 academic session, a short-term working group had been established to review all the viable options and make recommendations to the University's Senior Management (SMG) on the appropriate course of action. SMG had approved that undergraduate teaching would recommence as originally planned on 21 September, with the exception of a few professional subject areas which had earlier scheduled starting dates. Most PGT programmes would commence on 21 September; however some PGT programmes in the College of MVLS would begin in November 2020, and approximately 70 PGT programmes would start in January 2021.

The Clerk of Senate also informed Senate that the University had developed and approved a No Detriment Policy in conjunction with the Students' Representative Council for the April/May assessment diet. Professor Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Vice Principal (Learning and Teaching) updated Senate on the progress of the Assessment and Feedback Transformation Project.

Court's thanks were given to the Clerk of Senate and Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching), to their teams and to College and School learning and teaching staff, for their tremendous work over recent weeks, and for the excellent nature of the high-level communications with staff and with students. The Clerk of Senate recorded her thanks to all colleagues across the University.

The communication from the Council of Senate was noted.

#### **CRT/2019/59. Any Other Business**

The SRC President, Scott Kirby, was attending his final meeting. Court thanked him for all his hard work over the last year and wished him well. Court also noted that Mr Robert Fraser, Director of Finance was also attending his last meeting as he was due to leave the University after 16 years. Court thanked him for all his hard work and excellent financial leadership over that time.

#### **CRT/2019/60. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Court will be held on Wednesday 30 September 2020, with further details to be confirmed.