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University of Glasgow

Court

Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 30 September 2020 by Zoom

Present:

Ms Elizabeth Passey Co-opted Member (Convener of Court), Cllr Susan Aitken (Glasgow City Council Assessor), Mr Graeme Bissett (Co-opted Member), Mr Liam Brady (SRC President Elect), Dr Chris Cassells (Trade Union Nominee) Ms Heather Cousins (Co-opted Member), Dr Craig Daly (Trade Union Nominee), 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), Professor Kirsteen McCue (Elected Academic Staff Member), Dr Morag Macdonald Simpson (General Council Assessor), 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), 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 Gregor Caldow (Executive Director of Finance), Dr David Duncan (Chief Operating Officer [COO] & University Secretary), Mr Chris Green (Chief Transformation Officer – Item 6 only), Professor Dan Haydon (Professor of Population Ecology and Epidemiology – Item 7 only) (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).

Apologies:

Ms Teresa Baños SRC Assessor on Court, Dr Simon Kennedy (Elected Academic Staff Member),

CRT/2020/01. Announcements

Dr Chris Cassells and Mr Liam Brady were welcomed to their first meeting of Court, as Trade Union Nominee and SRC President respectively. Court noted that Margaret Anne McParland, who had been a member of Court since 2012 as Trade Union Nominee, was due to retire from the University in November 2020. Court wished to pass on their thanks to her for all her hard work whilst working at the University and as a member of Court.

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.

It was recorded that Mr Gregor Caldow, Executive Director of Finance had briefed Court at the pre-lunch session, covering the Universities Superannuation Scheme. Court's thanks for the briefing were recorded.

Court was reminded that papers and business were confidential.

CRT/2020/02. Minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday 23 June 2020

The minutes were approved.

CRT/2020/03. Matters Arising

Court noted that under item *CRT 2019.55.3 Committee Remit and Appointments* that the concerns in relation to the breakdown by protected characteristics on Court Committees were yet to be addressed. Court agreed that the Nominations Committee should look at ways to target specific groups more efficiently to increase diversity on Court Committees.

CRT/2020/04. Covid-19 Update and Planning

Court received an update from the Principal, Dr David Duncan and Mr Gregor Caldow on the current planning and progress made following the reopening of the campus. Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- The recent outbreak in student halls following the start of the academic session. A number of steps had been put in place to support the students including – 4 week rent rebate, £50 cash, and hot meals for students in self isolation. Checks on the students were also being regularly undertaken to ensure that all students felt supported and mental health issues could be dealt with at an early opportunity;
- The Scottish Government had supported the return of students to campuses across the country, with blended learning and the student experience seen as the key focus;
- SRC/GUSA had been heavily involved with supporting students during the isolation period and thanks were noted;
- Health and Safety was the key consideration to all decisions made, with regular meetings of key staff taking place. This had included the introduction of a regular briefing for the Convener of Court following the outbreak in the student halls;
- Construction work had resumed on the James McCune Smith Building, Research Hub and the Clarice Pears Building. The ASBS continued to be on hold;
- Whilst the University continues to focus on how it can exit the crisis, the impact of the movement to online is still unclear for student recruitment, with estimates of fee income from External Relations ranging from “optimistic” £19m above budget, “central” £11m below budget to “pessimistic” £40m below budget, with student recruitment now looking closer to the “central” estimates.

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 the importance of a supportive approach was noted. Court noted that it was important that lessons, in relation to the outbreak in student halls, were identified to ensure that any future outbreaks could be prevented as far as is possible. The key focus in the short term would be supporting students and looking forward to the September intake of PGT students.

It was noted that impact on the reputation of the University following the outbreak would need to be carefully monitored to ensure that there was no impact on student recruitment but it was felt that at present the University had handled the situation well.

Court thanked staff and students for their continued efforts and recognised all the hard work that had been undertaken during the pandemic to keep the University running.

CRT/2020/05. University Risk Register

Court received a presentation by Mr Gregor Caldow, Executive Director of Finance on the updated Risk Register. It was noted that over the last 12 months a large amount of work had been put into building and implementing the Risk Management Framework, which had been delayed slightly due to the impact of Covid-19 and operational needs. A Risk Management group had been established to monitor and drive forward the implementation of the new format, with College management now supporting the new format. Court recognised the tremendous amount of work that had gone into producing the Risk Register and thanked all those involved.

Court approved the University Risk Register.

CRT/2020/06. Report from the Principal

CRT/2020/06.1 World-Changing Glasgow Transformation programme WCGT

A briefing paper on WCGT progress and developments was noted by Court. Court members also received a presentation by Chris Green (Chief Transformation Officer) which updated members on the key progress over the last 12 months by the WCGT. During the presentation it was noted that the WCGT was:

- Outcome focused – whether that is by improving the students and/or staff experience, supporting research and teaching activity, introducing change that leads to service improvement and/or cost improvement or avoiding future costs;
- Internally owned – where WCGT works in partnership with the University, underpinned by a compelling communication and engagement strategy;
- Delivering results that are sustainable – by enhancing the culture and behaviours needed to enable positive change, enabled by building capability for the longer term.

The WCGT portfolio currently consisted of the following projects:

- Smart Campus - Creating the future digital environment for the University campus, with social, technological and economic impact for the University and the city of Glasgow;
- Assessment & Feedback - Improving the experience for students and staff by significantly redesigning how the University undertakes the assessment of, and provides feedback to students;
- Student Forecasting & Enrolment - Enhancing the student enrolment experience for UG and PGT students to enable effective decision-making and course selection
- Professional Services - Designing services to meet the user's needs, improving the quality of the service delivered and reducing cost;
- Responsive Solutions - A 'bottom-up' service that identifies and addresses important (to staff) challenges in the day-to-day experience.

Court also noted that the WCGT was aiming to deliver:

- UofG Life- A new app for students, focused on enabling students to feel part of the University community was now live. The initial design was complete with a limited number of features that would be added to during the next 3-6 months;
- Online Assessment Management – included is a portal for students to access all their assessment and feedback in one place;
- Learning through assessment – the new policy framework for how the University undertakes assessment & feedback;

- Service reviews - to improve the quality and consistency of the services provided by People & OD; Information Services and Estates;
- Process reviews - to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the processes that relate to OAM and timetabling, to simplify and streamline the processes and resources needed and reduce the costs associated with both.

During the discussion it was noted that WCGT had been heavily involved with the University Covid response, helping to drive forward: design and set up of a call centre; exam diets online; Modern Ways of Working Website to support switch to remote working; Glasgow Anywhere: Health and Wellbeing support content. A number of projects were also accelerated such as the Digital Service delivery and Assessment and Feedback Phase 1. The Key priorities moving forward would be to continue to develop capabilities to enable change across the University; continue the shift to more digital services for staff and students and to deliver cost savings targets in the partnership with budget holders.

Court thanked Chris Green for the presentation.

CRT/2020/06.2 Principal's Report

Court received the report from the Principal – Paper 6 and the following areas were noted:

- The SFC review which had been commissioned by Richard Lochhead, Minister for Further Education, Universities and Science in Scotland was due to report its first stage findings in late September/ early October;
- The Scottish Government had confirmed that additional funding will be made available for the additional 2020-21 entrants due to the results change in Higher Grades;
- Brexit/Visa and Immigration – negotiations between the UK and EU continued and it had been confirmed that the transition period would not be extended.
- REF 2021 a revised submission date had been set of the 31 March 2021; in recognition of ongoing uncertainty caused by Covid-19, the funding bodies had set a review date in November 2020.

The Principal reported that the student intake numbers were even more challenging to predict accurately this year than in a normal cycle. In the case of international students, there was a number of factors at play including travel restrictions, temporary closure of visa centres, and potential deferral requests. The UK admissions system was also disrupted by the situation with A Level and Higher results. SMG had received weekly updates over the past few months and this would continue for the November 2020 and January 2021 PGT intakes. The figures below were derived from a snapshot of registrations as at 18 September.

Undergraduate (UG):

- Total UG registrations were currently 5383 against a target of 5079. Home/EU funded places are on target with 3822 students registered vs 3496 target;
- RUK - 767 against a 712 target;
- International - currently 766 against a target of 871. In addition, a further 220 international UG students have engaged with the registration process and have completed academic registration but are yet to complete financial registration.

Postgraduate Taught Entry (excluding PDGE):

- Home/EU/RUK- September intake – 1704 registration vs central target of 1443
- International - September intake – 1975 registration vs central target of 1956

It was noted that PGT registrations were compared on a weekly basis with forecasts based on three scenarios (optimistic, central and pessimistic). It appeared that currently the central forecast was the most likely outcome for the September intake. PGT applicants would continue to submit documentation until 12 October for September programmes, and until 2 November for November programmes.

Court noted a query raised in relation to the current hold on recruitment of staff and if this would be lifted in light of the student intake. It was reported that a weekly meeting was taking place to look at staff recruitment and which posts could be released. It was also noted that as the student numbers were confirmed throughout the three intakes, decisions would be made on the proportional release of budgets. Concerns over the workload of staff and the impact of working from home would continue to be monitored by line managers and SMG to ensure that a balance was maintained between financial resources and staff capacity.

Court was informed that Professor Chris Pearce had been appointed as the Vice-Principal (Research) and Professor Iain McInnes has been appointed as the Vice-Principal and Head of College for MVLS. With regards to the Rector it was noted that this position was still vacant and that the SRC was involved with discussion looking at ways to run an online election. Court thanked the Principal for his update.

CRT/2020/07. Report from the University Secretary

Court noted the report from the University Secretary - Paper 7. The following areas were discussed in further detail by Court.

CRT 2020.07.1 Glasgow Green- The University of Glasgow's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Court received a report from Sustainability Working Group (WG) and welcomed Professor Dan Haydon to the meeting, who outlined the key points. The Glasgow Green paper set out the proposed climate change strategy and action plan for the University. It followed the Principal's declaration of a climate emergency in May 2019 – a statement which was reported world-wide and which reinforced similar messages from the UK Parliament and the Scottish Government as well as other universities around the globe.

Court also noted the draft Business travel guidelines and options on offsetting that were currently being developed. Court also received a report from the Green New Deal Coalition.

Court noted that the action plan and strategy outlined the context in which the University was operating, reviewed the progress to date in reducing carbon emissions and set out a route to 'net-zero' carbon emissions by 2030. The action plan proposed a series of actions under five headings:

- Engaging and Empowering Our Community
- Promoting Efficiency
- Governance and Policy
- Continuous Improvement Initiatives
- Building Resilience through Partnerships

The action plan and strategy had also drawn on discussions at Senior Management Group, Senate and the Student Experience Committee, alongside consultation seminars with staff and students, and a wider survey. It was noted that these discussions had demonstrated that

all sections of the University community had agreed that the University should go further and faster in addressing climate change; there was also a consensus that the University should monitor the impact of the actions and make the data public in an open and transparent manner.

During discussion, Court noted that it was essential that the action plan and strategy were affordable and achievable. It was noted that at present there was no budget allocated to green projects centrally and given the current constraints on the University finances following the impact of Covid-19 this was an important consideration that should be monitored.

The following areas were also noted during the discussion:

- Guidelines were in place to ensure that staff mobility in relation to conferences did not impact on promotion or career progression;
- The cost of carbon offsetting needed to be monitored to ensure it was affordable given the impact of Covid-19 on the University's finances;
- Concerns were raised about staff working from home and the impact of this, both in terms of the environmental impact but also the financial cost for staff;
- The need to work with the Glasgow City Council which was also developing a plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030;
- Reputational impact if the University was not seen to be ambitious in its strategy.

Court members noted that there were many challenges around the sustainability agenda, and this was an area that many Universities were focusing on at present. Whilst it was key for the University to move forward with an action plan and strategy, Court felt that the University could be more ambitious both in terms of targets and actions taken. During the discussion Court agreed that University should make better use of the University's full suite of assets e.g. land at Cochno Farm. With regards to funding, Court noted that alongside the allocation of budget, funding should also be sought, from alternative areas such as philanthropists and businesses keen to enable the University to lead the sector in the UK. It was highlighted that through COP26 it was important that the University was seen as taking a key role. Court also noted that the strategy and action plan should be seen as an evolving policy to ensure that sustainability and social responsibility continued to play a key part in the University.

Following discussion Court agreed to the approve the Glasgow Green - The University of Glasgow's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and it was undertaken that:

- 1) The Court Sub committees would review the impact of the strategy and action plan;
- 2) The report would be reviewed with the aim of incorporating good ideas from the Green New Deal Coalition into the action plan;
- 3) The policy wording would be updated to ensure that more ambitious models could be incorporated in the future.

CRT 2020.07.2 Student Contract 2020-21

Court approved the updated Student Contract for academic session 2020-21.

CRT 2020.07.3 Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR 4)

The University's ELIR was held in 2019 and six recommendations were noted. Court noted the follow-up report on the University's reflection and responses to the recommendation.

Court approved the University's ELIR response to the recommendations.

CRT 2020.07.4 New and continuing Court Members

Court noted that Dr Chris Cassells had been nominated as the Trade Union nominee from amongst the University's support staff, for 4 years from 1 August 2020.

Court also noted that Liam Brady had began his term on Court from the 1 July 2020 *ex officio* as the SRC President, for one year.

CRT 2020.07.5 Court Business 2020/21

Court received the Schedule of Court Business for the coming year, together with the Statement of Primary Responsibilities of Court and a list of remits/memberships of Court Committees for the session.

The attendance lists for meetings of Court and its Committees for 2019/20 had been reviewed; there were no issues for action in connection with this.

CRT 2020.07.6 Directors of Research Institutes and Heads of School Appointments

Court noted the following changes:

School of Psychology and the Institute of Neuroscience and Psychology (INP)

Court noted that a review was currently taking place into the possible consolidation of the School and Institute. Court approved the extended appointment of the current Directorship of INP and Headship of the School, Professor Philippe Schyns, for 6 months or until the conclusion of the consultation period, whichever is earliest.

School of Critical Studies

Professor Alice Jenkins had been re-appointed Head of the School of Critical Studies from 1 January 2021 to 31 July 2022.

CRT 2020.07.7 GUSA Court representative

Court approved Kirsty McConn-Palfreyman, Head of Student Engagement as the Court representative on GUSA.

CRT/2020/08. 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/2020/09. Reports of Court Committees

CRT/2020/09.1. Finance Committee

The Committee had received a number of papers that outlined the impact of Covid-19 on the University cash position; projected student numbers; and the USS Consultation. Court noted a report by the Executive Director of Finance which outlined the main discussion points at the Finance Committee. Court also received a brief overview of the USS Scheme and the status of the 2020 valuation.

CRT/2020/09.1.2 CapEx Applications

The Committee had received five capital expenditure request and had approved all of the requests – Windows Virtual Desktops, Optical Tables, Diffractometer for College of Science and Engineering, Automated quantitative pathology imaging and an Upgrade to JIF Facility.

The report was noted.

CRT/2020/09.2 Estates Committee

CRT/2020/9.2.1 Capital Plan

The Committee had received an update on the update on the Capital Plan and the impact of Covid-19 on the building projects. The Committee also received an update on the Minor project budgets which had been prioritised with more fund being made available for maintenance and in particular for IT spend.

CRT/2020/09.2.2 CapEx applications

The Committee had approved CapEx applications relating to: purchase of optical tables for the Research Hub, £0.5million; COSE application for an diffractometer and new multiuser analytical suite in the sum of £0.6million; the purchase of an automated quantitative pathology imaging system in the sum of £0.501million.

The report was noted.

CRT/2020/09.4 Audit & Risk Committee

The Committee received a briefing on the updated Risk Register. It was agreed that the updated Register would be included in Court papers for September 2020 for approval. The Committee also received internal audit reports on: Academic Collaborations; Careers Service Graduate Employability and Covid-19 Return to Campus Preparations. The Committee received an updated 2020/21 internal audit plan. The Committee also received an addendum to the External Audit report for 2019/20. The Committee approved the Annual statement on Compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The report was noted.

CRT/2020/10. Any Other Business

No substantive items were noted.

CRT/2020/11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Court will be held on Wednesday 25 November 2020 at 2pm via Zoom. A Pre-Court briefing will take place at 12pm via Zoom.

Court noted that due to the ongoing pandemic the Court Dinner will not take place after the Court meeting but it will be rescheduled for Summer 2021, if circumstances allow.