



## Court

### Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 29 September 2021

#### **Present:**

Ms Elizabeth Passey Co-opted Member (Convener of Court), Mr Graeme Bissett (Co-opted Member), 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 Simon Kennedy (Elected Academic Staff Member), Mr Laic Khaliq (Co-opted Member), Ella McCabe (SRC President), Professor Kirsteen McCue (Elected Academic Staff Member), Paula McKerrow (Trade Union Nominee), Mr Ronnie Mercer (Co-opted Member), Mr David Milloy (Co-opted Member), Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli (Principal), Ms Elspeth Orcharton (Co-opted Member), Lady Rita Rae (Rector), Ms Lesley Sutherland (General Council Assessor), Mr Gavin Stewart (Co-opted Member), Dr Bethan Wood (Elected Academic Staff Member)

#### **Attending:**

Gregor Caldwell (Executive Director of Finance), Professor Frank Coton (Senior Vice Principal (Academic) and Deputy Vice Chancellor), Bonnie Dean (Vice-Principal Corporate engagement & Innovation), Dr David Duncan (Chief Operating Officer [COO] & University Secretary), Amber Higgins (Executive Officer and Clerk to Court).

#### **Apologies:**

Cllr Susan Aitken (Glasgow City Council Assessor), Ms Julia Hegele (SRC Assessor), Dr Morag Macdonald Simpson (General Council Assessor), Dr June Milligan (Co-opted Member), Professor Jill Morrison (Vice-Principal & Clerk of Senate).

#### **CRT/2021/01. Announcements**

The Convener welcome everyone to the first meeting of academic year 2021-2022 and noted it was the first face to face meeting for Court since Feb 2020, due to the Pandemic.

The Convener welcomed Bonnie Dean (Vice-Principal Corporate Engagement & Innovation) as an attendee, Ella McCabe (SRC President) and Paula McKerrow (Trade Union Nominee), as members, to the meeting.

Court's thanks were recorded to Dr Chris Cassells for his service to Court since August 2021 as the Trade Union Representative, and noted that he had recently moved on to a new role at the National Library of Scotland.

Court's thanks were also recorded to Professor Neal Juster, Senior Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who had left the University to take up the position of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lincoln. Neal joined the University of Glasgow in 2007 as Vice-Principal (Strategy and Resources) and was appointed to the position of Senior Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor in 2013. He had led the University's strategic planning process

through the development of three strategic plans: 2010-15 (Glasgow 2020: a Global Vision), 2015-20 (Inspiring People Changing the World) and culminating in the recently published World Changers Together. Court wished Professor Juster the very best for the future.

There was the following declaration 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 Dr David Duncan, Rachel Sandison, Vice-Principal (External Relations) and Professor Jaime Toney, Professor in Environmental and Climate Science had briefed Court at the pre-lunch session on the Sustainability Strategy and COP26. Court's thanks for the briefing were recorded.

Court was reminded that papers and business were confidential.

### **CRT/2021/02. Minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday 22 June 2021**

The minutes were approved.

### **CRT/2021/03. Matters Arising**

Court noted that under previous item *CRT/2020/54. University Strategy – KPIs* – the KPI's were nearly complete and Court would receive the final KPI's at its next meeting in November.

### **CRT/2021/04. Covid-19 Update and Planning**

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

- Students had returned to campus and there would be a gradual increase in the numbers, with class sizes limited to 50 students and large lectures taking place online. The number of cases of Covid in the student halls remained low;
- Health and Safety was the key consideration to all decisions made, with regular meetings of key staff taking place. Staff and students were being advised to wear face masks in busy areas and inside buildings when moving around. Plans were also being progressed for a gradual return to on campus work for office based staff but staff were still being encouraged to work from home where this was possible;
- Construction work had progressed over the summer on the Research Hub and the Clarice Pears Building. It was noted that construction work had commenced on the ASBS;
- Student numbers appeared to be very positive for 2021/22 but it was noted that registration was still ongoing, with confirmed numbers expected in October.

During the discussion it was noted that the University was unable to offer student accommodation to a small number of students who had requested it and were entitled to the university's accommodation guarantee. Alternatives had been provided within Paisley and Stirling but there were still a very small number of students that were unable to find suitable accommodation. It was reported that this was likely to be due to the pressures of COP26, increased student numbers across the City and the low availability of suitable rental accommodation in Glasgow.

A query was raised about the use of online exams, particularly in relation to the STEM subjects. Professor Frank Coton reported that colleagues were working closely with the Schools and Colleges to use a blended approach beyond the December exam diet and that plans for Semester 2 were still in the early stages.

A concern was also raised about staff welfare, particularly in the areas where there had been a large January intake, which had meant that a number of academic and support staff had been unable to take a break over the summer holidays. The impact of the blended learning with both online and class room based learning being on-going was also noted to be causing acute problems for staff. The Principal noted that there was a level of tiredness across staff at the start of term which was not usual and it was important that the institution recognised this. It was also noted that the University had reported to the Scottish Government that the blended learning approach was not sustainable in the long term and that plans for Semester 2 needed to be confirmed as soon as possible. It was also noted that there would be no January 2022 intakes beyond those areas where January intakes were the norm or were planned by the Schools and Colleges.

The SRC President also noted that it was important for the University to ensure that the student experience across the institution was the same for each student, as there had been reports of differing levels of support and face-to-face teaching.

Court thanked staff and students for their continued efforts and recognised all the hard work that had been undertaken during the last academic session.

#### **CRT/2021/05. University Risk Register**

Court received a presentation by Mr Gregor Caldwell, 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. It was noted that the risk register had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and was recommended for approval. A number of risks were discussed, and 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/2021/06. Innovation Strategy**

FOI Exempt/Commercially confidential

#### **CRT/2021/07. Report from the Principal**

##### *CRT/2021/07.1 Principal's Report*

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

- The SFC Review was subsequently published on 29 June and included a series of sensible recommendations to the Scottish Government, most notably urging a commitment to multi-year funding, protecting excellent discovery research and recognising more fully the importance of international education connections. The Review also underlined the importance of meeting changing student expectations and finding better ways to support lifelong learning, already areas of focus for Glasgow;

- The UK Government has announced a reshuffle for the Cabinet, with the Universities Minister, Michelle Donelan also now a Cabinet member;
- University Rankings – Times Higher Education – The University had been placed 86th, an improvement of 6 places from 92nd in 2021 and 13 places from 99th in 2020 and in the Guardian league table Glasgow's position had improved by one place to 11th in the UK;
- On 17 September the Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide was published and the University was named as Scottish University of the Year. The University was now placed 12th in the UK – up two places from last year, 8th in the Russell Group and 2nd in Scotland.

The Principal also updated Court on the changes to SMG following Professor Neal Juster's departure. Professor Frank Coton would be Vice Principal (Strategy and Resources) and in addition he would be Senior Vice Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic). As there would be no replacement for Professor Juster, and to ensure that Professor Coton did not have to cover all external deputizing duties as DVC, other members of SMG would also be appointed in due course to deputise externally as DVCs. Dr David Duncan as COO would take on responsibility for oversight and leadership of the Estates Capital Plan.

It was also noted that Professor Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh would step down as Vice Principal/Head of the College of Arts at the end of June 2022. Professor Ó Maolalaigh had been Head of College since January 2015, and when he demitted office in 2022 he would return to his substantive post as Professor of Gaelic.

The Principal also reported that Professor Jill Morrison's term as Vice Principal and Clerk of Senate would come to an end on 31 July 2022. In accordance with the existing formal procedure for the appointment of Clerk of Senate, a finding committee would be established over the coming months. The call for nominations was expected to be issued in December/January with recommendations brought to Senate in February 2022.

The Convener thanked the Principal for the update.

### **CRT/2021/08. Report from the University Secretary**

Court noted the report from the University Secretary - Paper 8. The following areas were discussed in further detail by Court.

#### *CRT 2021.08.1 Protocol for Managing Speaker Events*

Court received the updated protocol intended to assist members of the University involved in managing events and arranging external speakers. The guidance had been updated and broadened out in the light of the obligations placed upon universities and other public bodies by the Equality Act and the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill. Court noted that most events, including academic seminars and guest lectures would continue to be seen as a normal part of the University's day-to-day activities. The protocol was only intended to be used in cases where colleagues or students involved in the organisation of events thought there might be cause for referral.

It was noted that the protocol, would be read in conjunction with the University's statement on Freedom of Speech and Senior Management Group had approved the new protocol.

Court approved the Protocol for Managing Speaker Events.

#### *CRT 2021.08.2 Governance Website*

Court noted that a new Governance Website had been developed. Governance was an integral part of the University and recently a comprehensive review of the corporate governance and decision-making framework had been undertaken. Over the last 9 months, the University had started to streamline the way it makes informed decisions at every level of the organisation from Court through Committees, SMG, Colleges and University Services and staff. The first phase was now complete and the new dedicated governance site could be found at <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/governance/> .

#### *CRT 2021.08.3 Disability Services Review*

At the Court meeting in February 2021 Court had received an update on an ongoing Disability complaint. Court noted that the case was still going through the University procedures, with one academic appeal outstanding and that the University would undertake a lessons learned exercise once the appeal was completed.

It was also reported that an internal audit of Disability Services, together with a review led by the Clerk of Senate, Professor Jill Morrison, had been undertaken. The University was in the process of implementing the recommendations from these exercises.

During discussion, Court noted that the Disability services review and (in due course) the report from the lessons learned exercise would be circulated to Court members for information.

#### *CRT 2021.08.4 New and continuing Court Members*

Court noted that Paula McKerrow had been nominated as the Trade Union nominee from amongst the University's support staff, for 4 years from 1 September 2021.

Court also noted that Ella McCabe had begun her term on Court from 1 July 2021 *ex officio* as the SRC President, for one year.

#### *CRT 2021.08.5 Court Business 2021/22*

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 2020/21 had been reviewed; there were no issues for action in connection with this.

#### *CRT 2021.08.6 Directors of Research Institutes and Heads of School Appointments*

Court noted the following changes:

##### *Head of the Dental School*

Court noted that Professor Aileen Bell had been appointed as Head of the Dental School from 1 September for a period of four years.

##### *Interim Director of Institute of Molecular, Cell & Systems Biology*

Professor Helen Walden had been appointed as Interim Director of Institute of Molecular, Cell & Systems Biology from 1 September 2021 for six months.

##### *Interim Head of School of Psychology and Neuroscience*

Professor Niamh Stack had been appointed as Interim Head of the School of Psychology and Neuroscience from 1 September 2021 for six months.

*CRT 2021.08.7 University of Glasgow Trust*

Court approved Professor Frank Coton, Senior Vice Principal (Academic) and Deputy Vice Chancellor as the Court representative on University of Glasgow Trust.

**CRT/2021/09. Student Matters, including: SEC Report; SRC President update**

The Rector reported that she continued to engage with students and the SRC on a number of issues and at present did not have any substantive items to raise with Court. It was noted that the Rector wished to pass on her thanks to the Court Office staff for their co-operation and support provided.

The SRC President highlighted a number of areas and the following were noted:

- Accommodation and isolation were seen as a concern for students, particularly in relation to the increased cost of rent and landlords exploiting students with unfit contracts;
- Student societies continued to face issues with finding adequate space for meetings on campus;
- Students were expressing concerns over the impact of COP26 on their studies on campus;
- Concerns were also expressed over the length of time it was taking to deal with student conduct cases and the impact this was having on student wellbeing.

During the discussion it was noted that, in addition to University advice services, students could seek support from the Citizens Advice Bureau, who would provide support to students on rent contracts. It was also noted that the move to online examinations had led to a significant increase in the student conduct cases and that the Senate office was processing these as quickly as possible.

The Convener thanked the Rector and SRC President for their reports.

**CRT/2021/10. Reports of Court Committees**

*CRT/2021/10.1. Finance Committee*

Graeme Bissett, chair of the Committee, outlined the report from the Committee which 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 noted the proposal from the Strategic Property Investment and Development Board (SPIDB) which had been considering how best to develop 'non-core' physical assets for the University. SPIDB were recommending that a development partner or partners was sought to help share the risk and reward in developing these assets. Court noted that the Finance Committee had approved the proposal to move to the next phase.

A concern was raised about the wording in the Finance committee minutes and it was agreed that these would be amended.

Court approved the request for a letter of consent to be drawn up in relation to signatories for the HSBC account and approved the revised schedule of delegated authority for innovation projects, in which the Finance Committee would require to approve transactions >£250k.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2021/10.2 Estates Committee*

Ronnie Mercer, chair of the Committee, outlined the report from the Committee which updated on the progress with the capital plan.

Court approved the demolition of the NHS Admin Building due to the cost constraints involved with remodelling the building, which would be prohibitive.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2021/10.3 Audit & Risk Committee*

Heather Cousins, chair of the Committee, reported that the Committee had received a briefing on the updated Risk Register. It was agreed that the updated Register would be included in Court papers for September 2021 for approval. The Committee also received internal audit reports on: Overseas Agents, MyCampus Follow up Review, Culture Audit and Business Continuity. The Committee had approved the Annual statement on Compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2021/10.4 IPSC*

Frank Coton, chair of the Committee reported that IPSC had provided guidance to develop the draft Research Computing service business case, requested by the Vice Principal for Research. IPSC had also approved the new Digital Experience Board remit to protect and optimise student and staff user experience, co-ordinating across multiple university service owners and platforms. IPSC noted updates from the Information Risk & Cyber Security Working group and current Internal Audit work. IPSC had agreed that plans would be prepared in alignment with a recognised cyber security framework to relate to risk and demonstrate a coherent approach.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2021/10.5 People and Organisational Development Committee*

Court noted that the Committee report included following items; USS pension developments, pay negotiations for 2021-22, Performance and Development Review plans for the forthcoming year, the latest developments from a diversity and inclusion perspective, and the University's participation in the 'Developing the Young Workforce' initiative. The Committee also received updates on the new Enquiry Management Service; establishment and delivery of the Lighthouse Lab; and Global Mobility.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2021/10.6 Nominations Committee*

Lesley Sutherland, chair of the Committee, provided an update to Court on the current recruitment process for the Co-opted members of Court. Court noted that the Committee had discussed the suggestions to improve diversity put forward by Court members and the next steps. The Committee also discussed the current information available on the Court website

and ways to improve the information.

The report was noted.

**CRT/2021/11. Any Other Business**

The Convener reported that Graeme Bissett, Co-opted Member of Court would be stepping down shortly and that this would be the last meeting of Court that he could attend. Graeme had been a member of Court for 8 years, the Chair of the Finance Committee and the University's first ever Vice-Convener of Court. Over that time he had made a huge contribution to the University and was leaving the University in a significantly stronger position. Court thanked warmly Graeme for his huge contribution and dedication over the last 8 years and wished him well for the future.

**CRT/2021/12. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Court will be held on Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 2pm in the Senate Room. A Pre-Court briefing will take place at 12pm.