



Court

Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 16 February 2022

Present:

Elizabeth Passey (Co-opted Member (Convener of Court)), Heather Cousins (Co-opted Member), David Finlayson (Co-opted Member), Professor Carl Goodyear (Elected Academic Staff Member), Linda Hanna (Co-opted Member), Duncan Henderson (SRC Assessor), Professor Nick Hill (Elected Academic Staff Member), Professor Simon Kennedy (Elected Academic Staff Member), Laic Khalique (Co-opted Member), Jonathan Loukes (Co-opted Member), Ella McCabe (SRC President), Professor Kirsteen McCue (Elected Academic Staff Member), Paula McKerrow (Trade Union Nominee), Dr Morag Macdonald Simpson (General Council Assessor), Ronnie Mercer (Chancellors Assessor), June Milligan (Co-opted Member), Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli (Principal), Elspeth Orcharton (Co-opted Member), Mr Gavin Stewart (Co-opted Member), Lesley Sutherland (General Council Assessor), Dr Bethan Wood (Elected Academic Staff Member)

Attending:

Gregor Caldwell (Executive Director of Finance), Professor Frank Coton (Senior Vice Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)), Dr David Duncan (Chief Operating Officer [COO] & University Secretary), Professor Jill Morrison (Vice-Principal & Clerk of Senate), Amber Higgins (Executive Officer and Clerk to Court). Item 4 - Susan Ashworth, (Executive Director of Information Services), & Mark Johnston (Director of IT Services), Item 5 - Chris Green (Chief Transformation Officer)

Apologies:

Cllr Susan Aitken (Glasgow City Council Assessor), Dr Craig Daly (Trade Union Nominee), Christopher Kennedy (Elected Professional Services Representative), Lady Rae (Rector).

CRT/2021/26. Announcements

The Convener welcomed Linda Hanna and Jonathan Loukes, Co-opted Members of Court, to their first meeting. The Convener also welcomed Susan Ashworth, (Executive Director of Information Services), Mark Johnston (Director of IT Services), and Chris Green (Chief Transformation Officer) to the meeting.

There was the following declaration of interest in relation to business to be conducted at the meeting: Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli as a member of the USS Trustee Company, as an ongoing declaration, given the updates on the scheme.

It was recorded that Professor Sara Carter, Vice-Principal and Head of College Social Sciences had given a presentation on the challenges and opportunities within the College. Court's thanks for the briefing were recorded.

Court was reminded that papers and business were confidential.

CRT/2021/027. Minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 24 November 2021

The minutes were approved.

CRT/2021/28. Matters Arising

No matters were raised.

CRT/2021/29. Information Services Strategic Plan

Court received a presentation by Professor Frank Coton, (Vice Principal Academic Planning and Technological Innovation), Susan Ashworth (Executive Director of Information Services) and Mark Johnston (Director of IT Services) on the Information Services Strategic Plan. The presentation provided an update on progress in relation to the University Technology Strategy and highlighted the next phase in the evolution of the strategy.

Court noted that the context of the strategy development had included a legacy of underinvestment in IT at a time of significant growth; operational structures that were not currently fit for purpose; the fact that the University was 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.

Since the last update to Court in February 2021, significant progress had been made in progressing the two major foundational projects - Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and the Network Infrastructure Programme (NIP). Considerable work had also been done to flesh out IT Services' approach to the evolutionary phase of the strategy which addressed the systems and applications landscape together with work on cyber security and on our ability to leverage data. The presentation, also provide Court with a further update on progress of the implementation of the Technology Strategy together with visibility of planned future work.

Court noted that the strategy continued to focus on three themes: community, connectivity and challenges. It was noted that there were significant challenges to overcome, such as: out-of-date business systems and end-of-life infrastructure; complex future IT landscape requiring greater flexibility; and staffing capabilities and capacity. Court also noted that progress was being made on the foundations for the future and that a structured approach to change and development was being taken. A business systems roadmap was being created to facilitate better longer-term planning and collective understanding of key decision points. Information security was also seen a key part of the strategy with a cyber security strategy and action plan being developed.

During the discussion it was noted that development of internal talent was part of the strategy and although key appointments were due to be made, there would be clear career pathways and training programmes for staff. It was also reported that SMG had agreed that all staff would be required to complete mandatory training modules on Moodle and would be required to use Multifactor Authentication (MFA).

Court thanked Professor Coton, Susan Ashworth, Mark Johnston and all IT staff for all their hard work on the strategy and their support for staff and students over the last year.

CRT/2021/30. Report from the Principal

CRT/2021/30.1 Transformation Programme update

Court members received a paper and presentation by Chris Green (Chief Transformation Officer) which updated members on progress in the transformation programme over the last 12 months. It was reported that COVID19 had disrupted the original timescales, in some cases accelerating rather than hindering progress. A revised set of priorities had been identified for future years. Key areas of activity since September 2020 had been:

- Project Aurora – Return to Campus/admissions. Supporting our senior leadership to engage, plan and design changes;
- Teaching & Timetabling support, including exam sustainability and Online assessment management;
- Digital solutions such as - UofG Life app;
- People & OD – enquiry management system and automation of HR activities;
- Finance – supported staff to identify solutions that could improve the Purchase to Pay (P2P) process; for Purchasing Officers, Procurement & Finance colleagues, and suppliers.

It was noted that for 2021/22, the focus was on continuing to improve the student and staff experience and, increasingly, making step change improvements to core business processes. One of the small-scale implications of Covid had been the need to respond to requests for support from the team for activity outside of the core transformation portfolio. Next year was seen as a period of consolidation and confident delivery; building back from COVID19, looking to scale work that had been piloted in one area (for example, automation) and increasingly making connections across solutions (for example, UofG Life app and its relationship with the MyGlasgow student portal).

During the discussion a query was raised about equality and diversity and the risks of automation in relation to HR process. It was noted that the automation was not linked to shortlisting candidates but addressed repetitive tasks; even so the work would be monitored for unintended consequences. Court also raised a query about the level of cost savings and financial targets set as part of the projects. It was noted that it was important to be transparent and realistic in terms of any cost savings.

Court thanked Chris Green for the presentation.

CRT/2021/30.2 Higher Education Developments & Scottish Government Budget

Court received the report from the Principal – Paper 5 and the following areas were noted:

- Admission updates – SMG had had the opportunity to review UCAS application data, following the UCAS deadline on 26 January 2022 for the majority of undergraduate courses. The overall picture for 2022 Undergraduate entry was positive, with applications up 1% overall on last year. It was confirmed that a package of enhanced scholarships to incentivise EU applicants, particularly those who are highly qualified, with the aim of maximising conversion had been agreed. PGT forecasts based on applications, offers, acceptances and deposits would be available from April.
- Scottish Government Budget – Within the Education and Skills Portfolio, the Scottish Funding Council had been allocated £1.97bn in 22/23, up from £1.91bn in 21/22. For

Higher Education, combined financing for Resource and Capital had risen 2% or by £22.3m.

- Higher education developments – Levelling UP White Paper and Horizon Europe

The Principal also reported that Senate had formally approved Professor Martin Hendry's appointment as the next Clerk of Senate. Court noted that Professor Hendry was a former Head of School of Physics and Astronomy and a member of the Nobel Prize winning LIGO scientific collaboration which made the first ever detection of gravitational waves in 2015. Court's congratulation to Professor Hendry's were noted.

The Convener thanked the Principal for the update.

CRT/2021/31. Report from the University Secretary

Court noted the report from the University Secretary - Paper 6. The following areas were discussed in further detail by Court.

CRT 2021.31.1 Disability Services Review

At the Court meeting in November 2021 Court received an update on an ongoing Disability complaint and review actions. Court noted that since the last update the University had undertaken a thematic review of support for disabled students, considering the experiences of disabled students (undergraduate, taught postgraduate, postgraduate research and visiting students) throughout the student life cycle, from application to graduation.

It was noted that due to recruitment and absence challenges it had been necessary to focus the remaining resources (2 advisers and D&I lead) on supporting students during Semester 1. All project work had therefore been suspended, and contingency plans put in place to ensure that needs assessment and the implementation of support arrangements were prioritised. The service recorded 2300 registrations in Semester 1 of 2021/22; total registrations at year end in 2020/21 were 2460.

The following interim practices were implemented during Semester 1:

- Students making repeat support claims were able to do so without attending for an appointment. (SAAS students have to renew their claim each academic year)
- Where possible students were offered shorter appointments, to maximise the use of the remaining adviser's time.
- The service worked with an external contractor to support needs assessment, in order to process registrations as quickly as possible.
- By reviewing the evidence that students submitted, the service was able to implement certain standard provisions without first seeing the student, for example extra time in exams. These provisions were added to My Campus and followed up with an appointment as soon as one became available.

The Disability Review Working Group would be reconvened in February 2022 to oversee the work that had recommenced following the onboarding of new staff to the service. New and returning colleagues had already begun working on projects which had been paused while staffing issues were resolved.

Court noted the update on the Disability Service Review and that progress was starting to be made. It was reported that there was a separate Mental Health Working Group and that this group would be asked to look at issues which related to neurodiversity.

CRT 2021.31.2 Glasgow Green – The University of Glasgow’s Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Court received an update on the Glasgow Green - The University of Glasgow’s Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The paper summarised the progress that had been made in reducing carbon emissions in recent years and highlighted other work that had been carried out on campus over the past year relating to the broader commitments made in *Glasgow Green*. Implementation of the strategy continued to be overseen by a working group co-chaired by the University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer and the Director of the Centre for Sustainable Solutions. The working group included senior academics, professional support staff and students from across the University, and met bi-monthly.

Court thanked the University Secretary for the update and noted the report.

CRT 2021.31.3 USS and Strike Action update

Court noted update on the USS national discussions and the UCU announcement of further strike action.

CRT 2021.31.4 Honorary Fellowship

Court approved the award of an Honorary Fellowship to Dr Stanley Naismith.

CRT 2021.31.5 New and continuing Court Members

Court noted that Jonathan Loukes and Linda Hanna had began their terms on Court on 1 December 2021 as Co-opted members of Court, for four years.

Court noted that Alan Seabourne had been extended for a further year as an External Member of Estates Committee until January 2023.

CRT 2021.31.6 Organisational Change

Court noted that following a 10-year review in Engineering earlier this year, a decision had been taken to rebrand and restructure the Division of Aerospace Sciences as 'Autonomous Systems & Connectivity'.

Court approved the name change to the Division of Autonomous Systems & Connectivity.

CRT 2021.31.7 Directors of Research Institutes and Heads of School Appointments

Court noted the following changes:

College of MVLS

Director of the Institute of Infection, Immunity & Inflammation

Professor Andy Waters had been appointed as the Director of Institute, Institute of Infection, Immunity & Inflammation, from 1 Feb 2022 for 5 years.

Interim Director of Institute of Infection, Immunity & Inflammation

Prof Paul Garside had his appointment as the Interim Director extended by a further month to 31 January 2022.

Interim Head of School of Psychology & Neuroscience

Prof Gregor Thut had been appointed as the Interim Head of School of Psychology & Neuroscience from 1 January 2022 for 6 months.

Interim Director of Institute of Cardiovascular & Medical Sciences

Prof Christian Delles had his appointment as the Interim Director of Institute extended until

31 July 2022.

Interim Director of Institute of Molecular, Cell & Systems Biology

Prof Helen Walden had her appointment as the Interim Director of Institute extended until 31 July 2022.

College of Social Sciences

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

Professor Fabrice Renaud had been appointed as the Head of School from 1 August 2022 for 4 years.

The Convener thanked the University Secretary for the update.

CRT/2021/32. Student Matters, including: SEC Report; SRC President update

The SRC President highlighted that an SEC Strategy was currently being developed and would focus on extracurricular activity and student experience outside of L&T. A query was raised from a Court member about the impact of inflation on students; the SRC President reported that this issue would be discussed at the next SRC Council meeting and they would work with the NUS on a response.

The Convener thanked SRC President for her report.

CRT/2021/33. Reports of Court Committees

CRT/2021/33.1 Finance Committee

Gavin Stewart, chair of the Committee outlined the report from the Committee. Court noted that the Committee had undertaken its annual review of the University's cash flow assumptions. Court noted that a proposal had been put forward to the Finance Committee in relation to the University holding £50m in working capital. The proposal outlined would supplement the existing policy, with a contingency to cover short term demand shocks, set at 25% of international fees plus an additional £50m for unplanned capital expenditure. The working capital and unplanned capital expenditure would rise with inflation over the lifetime of the cash flow. It was noted that this represented a significant change in the minimum cash level.

Court approved this change in policy in the working capital held by the University as outlined in the Finance Committee papers.

Court noted that an additional paper had been circulated to members which outlined the development of a student accommodation nominations proposal. The University of Glasgow currently had 3,399 bed spaces within its current portfolio, whilst an additional 203 bed spaces were purchased from Unite Students to accommodate residents who were unable to secure accommodation within the existing portfolio. It was anticipated that demand would continue to exceed supply, and as a result, the University of Glasgow would purchase bed spaces to mitigate the risk of students not joining or withdrawing from the University due to a lack of accommodation. The proposal was to purchase 826 bed spaces for academic year 2022/2023, rising to 1,000 for the four subsequent years resulting in a total contractual period of 5 years, with a break clause after 3 years that only the University of Glasgow could initiate.

During the discussion the SRC President raised concerns about the increase in student numbers and the impact on the student experience, with several support services already

stretched to capacity. It was reported that student number projections were being held level and would be back to pre-covid levels for 22/23 and then would see a modest growth at a lower level than there had been historically. It was also noted that the University was engaging with the Glasgow City Council in relation to student homelessness and private rental accommodation.

Court approved the nominations proposal as outlined in the paper.

The report was noted.

CRT/2021/33.2 Estates Committee

Ronnie Mercer, chair of the Committee, outlined the report from the Committee and reported that the draft Carbon Management Plan had been discussed. Further work was required before it would be finalised.

Court approved the changes to the remit of the Committee and the report was noted.

CRT/2021/33.3 IPSC

Frank Coton, chair of the Committee, outlined the report from the Committee. Court noted that Laic Khalique had agreed to be the Vice-Chair of the Committee.

The report was noted.

CRT/2020/33.4 Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee

Court noted the report and approved the changes to the remit of the Committee.

CRT/2021/33.5 Remuneration Committee

June Milligan, chair of the Committee, reported that the key matters were discussed at the last Court meeting and indicated that the report was for noting.

Court noted the report and no substantive items were raised.

CRT/2021/34. Annual Complaints Report – 2020-21

Court noted the annual report on complaints activity during the academic session 2020/21, noting also a comment from Dr Duncan that the emphasis of the procedure was on resolution and a 'lessons learned' approach. Court agreed that it was important that staff dealing with complaints were supported to ensure that their wellbeing was not adversely affected, particularly in the case of serial complainants targeting staff.

It was agreed that future reports to Court should include more detail on lessons learned and what changes were being implemented as a result of the complaints and outcomes.

CRT/2021/35. Senate Matters

Court noted the report from the Senate meetings held on the 9 December 2021 and 1 February 2022. The Clerk of Senate reported that Senate had received the Library Annual Report and it was noted that the Library had faced a challenging year, having to tailor services at short notice in response to changing guidance from the Scottish Government. This had required a complex balancing of service needs, whilst maintaining a safe environment for study. Court thanks were noted to the Library staff for the way in which they risen to these challenges.

The Clerk of Senate reported that Senate had received updates on the Western Site development and the COP26 Legacy. Court also noted that Senate had approved the appointment of the new Clerk of Senate, Professor Martin Hendry, as a replacement to Professor Jill Morrison, who was due to step down in August 2022.

The Convener thanked the Clerk of Senate for the report.

CRT/2021/36 Other Business

No substantive items were raised.

CRT/2021/37. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Court will be held on Wednesday 20 April 2022 at 2pm in the Senate Room. A Pre-Court briefing will take place at 12pm.