MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT
26 February 2015

Present: Richard Hunter (Convener)
Principal Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Vice-Principal Professor Scott MacGregor, Ronnie Cleland, Marion Venman, Dr Archie Bethel, Jeremy Beeton, Margaret McGarry, Susan Kelly, Dr Alistair Goldsmith, Councillor Stephen Curran, Professor Lisa Woolfson, Dr Debra Willison, Dr Jonathan Delafield-Butt, Niall Sturrock, Gary Paterson

Attending: Hugh Hall, David Coyle, Professor David Littlejohn, Professor Susan Hart, Professor Douglas Brodie, Professor Atilla Incecik, Sandra Heidinger, Simon Jennings, Ray McHugh, Stella Matko, Jill Farrell, Dr Stuart Brough, Dr Lewis Allan

Apologies: Dr Jack Perry, Dr Jane Morgan, Gillian Hastings, Malcolm Roughhead, Alison Culpan, Professor James Thomson, Dr Veena O’Halloran, Mairi MacVicar

Welcome and apologies

The Convener noted apologies and welcomed Court to the Technology & Innovation Centre. Professor Douglas Brodie, in attendance as Executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, was welcomed in his first meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

1. Minutes

The minute of the meeting held on 20 November 2014 was approved.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Principal’s Report

The Principal informed members of the following key activities since the November meeting:

- Principal’s Engagement Sessions: 10 meetings with approximately 2,500 staff held in early January to discuss the University’s Values – with the award of staff-nominated Strathclyde Medals to follow in June linked to the Values
- Recruitment: 26 early career academic staff have been appointed through the Strathclyde Chancellor’s Fellowship Scheme, with a recruitment scheme for senior academic staff under development
- REF 2014 results (tabled under Item 4)
- Engagement with the Scottish Funding Council, Scottish Government and planned Ministerial visits to the University
- Development of a University Innovation White Paper is underway
- International engagements, including with Stanford University, Airbus Group and forthcoming visits to New York University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- The launch of the International Public Policy Institute, chaired by the Chancellor
- The 2015 James Blyth Lecture, given by Dr Ignacio Galan, Chairman of Iberdrola
- Participation in the Dowling Review of business-university research collaborations, established following a request by the UK Minister for Universities, Science and Cities, Rt Hon. Greg Clark MP.
Members discussed the research funding allocation expected from the Scottish Funding Council following the REF 2014 results, with the allocations to be circulated to Court when available. Members requested that the University’s Innovation White Paper be circulated to Court prior to publication.

4. Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 results

The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science presented the University’s results in the REF 2014 assessment, following the distribution of initial reports to Court in mid-December.

Members noted the following points:

- The use of three main ranking methods: GPA (37th in UK, 5th in Scotland), Research Power (30th in UK, 4th in Scotland) and Intensity (17th/18th in UK, 5th/4th in Scotland)
- The University’s performance place it in the top tier of Scottish institutions, alongside Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews universities
- The criticality and difficulty of judging the 2*/3* boundary, with a variance across the Units of Assessment in the accuracy of this prediction.

Members reviewed performance for each Unit of Assessment and the sub-profiles of Outputs, Impact and Environment. The Convener welcomed the results, noting the strong improvement on the RAE 2008 results and the key role played by the project management team.


Members discussed the following points:

- Year-on-year growth in the number of MD40 entrants while entry tariff points continue to improve
- Improvement in the retention rates of MD40 students and the University’s ability to track and support MD40 students
- Means of increasing number of students from the Rest of the UK, with improvements to marketing and new undergraduate degrees in development
- Expected expenditure on hiring senior academic staff and associated costs, with financial planning required given the time lag expected between start dates and the generation of research income.

6. Technology & Innovation Centre progress update

The Executive Director of the Technology & Innovation Centre provided an overview of progress made to deliver the additionality and income outlined in the original investment case for the Technology & Innovation Centre, approved by Court in November 2011. Members noted that the business plan has been updated since November 2011 to reflect progress to date, changes in thematic mixes to reflect new opportunities, timing differences and sensitivities. It was noted that attributable income and the financial plan supporting the investment case are on target, with Audit Committee satisfied with the method of attribution. The active management of known risks and sensitivities highlighted in the paper were discussed, with members commenting on the importance of cyber security given the range of industrial collaborators and an ambition for the University to lead in this area. Members were reminded that the date for the formal opening of the Technology & Innovation Centre has been set for Friday 3 July.

7. National Physical Laboratory (NPL) update

The Chief Operating Officer summarised an earlier communication to Court members providing an update on academic and legal/commercial progress on the NPL partnership. Members noted that the Serco management contract of NPL ended as planned on 31 December 2014, with the first meeting of the interim NPL Board held in January. It was noted that a formal update report will be provided to the April Court meeting, with the Convener requesting that the report include academic opportunities and a comparison with the proposal approved at the 16 April 2014 Court meeting. Members suggested that they would welcome an opportunity to visit the NPL site in Teddington.
8. Strategic Plan 2015-2020 development

Court considered the draft format, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and structure for the University’s Strategic Plan 2015-20.

Members discussed the following points:
- Proposed reduction in the number of KPIs from 22 to 16 in comparison with the current Strategic Plan
- The planning framework for the University and whether this can be simplified given the additional requirement to complete an Outcome Agreement for the Scottish Funding Council
- Amending the ‘Effective staff’ objective to ‘Effective and engaged staff’
- The role of University sport within the strategy – featuring within student experience and academic research on sport, health and wellbeing
- The importance of communicating the strategy as one element of wider marketing activity
- Target markets for international students and likely growth from these countries – with an International Advisory Board to provide further advice in this area when established
- Future papers should draw out how the November Court Strategy Session has informed the development of the Strategic Plan.

Items for formal approval

9. Outcome Agreement Annex 2015-16

The University’s Outcome Agreement Annex 2015-16 was approved for submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

10. Student Residences Investment

Proposed expenditure of £13.92M to modernise student residences over a five year period from 2015 was approved, to be funded by operating surpluses from the residences and proceeds from the sale of the Ivanhoe Road residence.

11. University Regulations: Election of Administrative and Professional Services Court Member

Court approved the removal of Regulation 1.17 and the expansion of Ordinance 2.1 relating to the election of the Administrative and Professional Services Court Member, with the effect of expanding the electoral roll to include part-time members of staff and staff in post for a period between six months and two years.

Members discussed the importance of communicating the election, explaining the role to the constituencies of the University and encouraging staff from both genders and a diverse range of backgrounds to apply.

12. Draft Schedule of Court Meetings, 2015-16

The schedule of Court meetings for academic year 2015-16 was approved.

Items for information

13. Higher Education Governance Bill – consultation response

The submission to the Scottish Government’s Higher Education Governance Bill, finalised by Court Business Group with authority delegated by Court, was noted.

14. University of Strathclyde Students’ Association (USSA) Constitutional Review update

The Student President provided an update on the five yearly review of the USSA constitution, with the submission of a new constitution for approval by Court to follow before the end of the current academic year.
Committee Reports

The following committee reports were received by Court:

15. Senate
Court approved Senate’s recommendations that:
 i) Student Representatives to become Full Members of Senate with immediate effect under Statute 3.1.6
 ii) Ordinance 3.1 to include the degree of Doctor of Information Science (DInfSci).

16. Executive Team
17. Court Business Group
18. Audit Committee
19. Estates Committee
20. Staff Committee

21. Strategic Marketing Group

The Vice-Convener updated Court on the newly established Strategic Marketing Group, noting that the first meeting took place in January and finalised the terms of reference for the Group. The Strategic Marketing Group will meet on a quarterly basis, with reports to Court to follow after each meeting.

22. Commercialisation and Investment Advisory Board

The Chief Operating Officer provided an update on the Commercialisation and Investment Advisory Board, indicating that a review of the Board after two years in operation is pending following a wider review of the Research & Knowledge Exchange Services Directorate, with a formal report to Court to follow upon completion. Members welcomed the funding approach set out in the paper.

23. Any other business

The Principal updated Court members on the Chancellor’s Medal and Strathclyde Medal, to be awarded for the first time in June.

Date of next meeting

- Strategic Session, 09.30-16.00, Thursday 30 April 2015

LA, 6 March 2015