

**MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT**  
**28 November 2019**

**Present:** Dame Sue Bruce (Convener), Paula Galloway (Vice-Convener), Professor Sir Jim McDonald (Principal), Dr Jeremy Beeton, Dr Archie Bethel, Ronnie Cleland, Amanda Corrigan, Alison Culpan, Gillian Hastings, Stephen Ingledew, Susan Kelly, Professor Scott MacGregor, Dr Katharine Mitchell, Brenda Wyllie, Councillor Ruairi Kelly, Peter Young

**Attending:** Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Douglas Brodie, Adrian Gillespie, Steven Wallace, Dr Veena O'Halloran, Sandra Heidinger, Professor Atilla Incecik, Professor Stephen McArthur (for item 6), Kirsty MacLeod (for item 4), Rona Smith, Professor Iain Stewart, Dr Daniel Wedgwood

**Apologies:** Kayla-Megan Burns, Matt Crilly, Dr Kathy Hamilton, Neil McGarvey, Gillian Pallis, Heather Stenhouse, Malcolm Roughead, Marion Venman

**Welcome and apologies**

The Vice-Convener, in the Chair for this meeting, welcomed Court members and attendees to the meeting and noted the apologies received.

No interests were declared.

**1. Minutes**

Court **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2019.

**2. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**3. Principal's Report**

Industrial Action

Eight days of strike action by the UCU union were underway. The University was working to minimise disruption. The strike had been called over pay and changes to the USS pension scheme, both of which were subject to national processes. The Principal reiterated the University's consistent position in favour of some increase in employer contributions to the USS pension and the retention of some elements of a defined benefits scheme. It was noted that the USS Joint Expert Panel continued to work to find appropriate outcomes and was due to report early in 2020.

Independent inquiry

The independent inquiry surrounding the behaviour of former staff member Kevin O'Gorman was underway, led by Craig Sandison QC. The USCO remained the single point of contact between the inquiry and the University. The University had pro-actively contacted all staff and students from the relevant period in order to enable anyone affected to come forward and provide evidence to the inquiry. A number of people had come forward. Court's leadership had been kept informed of the progress of the inquiry.

Awards

Strathclyde had recently been awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education, a prestigious award presented to a small selection of UK institutions every two years. Strathclyde had been

selected as a winner for its excellence in energy innovation. In recognition of the contributions of all staff to the University's success, two additional days' leave had been announced, extending the Christmas break. This had been very well received by staff. The prize would be awarded at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace on 20 February.

Other recent awards included:

- a Green Gown Award, in the Student Engagement category, for the Global Student initiative;
- the Partnership award at the Herald Society Awards, won by the Strathclyde-led project Stand Up For Siblings;
- best conference venue for over 250 delegates at the CN Academic Conference and Awards, awarded to the Technology & Innovation Centre;
- Scotland's Apprentice of the Year and the Graduate Apprentice Rising Star at the Scottish Apprenticeship Awards, both won by Strathclyde students;
- for the third consecutive year, the Diversity through Education Award at the Herald & GenAnalytics Diversity Awards (joint winners with MCR Pathways), this year for work to support asylum seekers and refugees.

The University had also been shortlisted for four THE Awards: Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development, Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative, Outstanding Library Team, and University of the Year.

#### Winter graduations

Approximately 2,500 students had graduated between 1 and 8 November. The Principal thanked Court members who had taken part in graduation ceremonies. Leading figures in public health, physics, engineering and computer science received honorary degrees at the ceremonies.

#### UK withdrawal from the EU

Amid continuing political uncertainty, the University was continuing to work to ensure its own readiness for all scenarios. The Business Continuity Group had widened its remit to consider scenarios other than No Deal and had met a number of times since the previous Court meeting.

#### CESAER activity

The Principal had chaired his final Presidency and Board meetings of CESAER, as part of the annual General Assembly meeting. Professor Tim Bedford had been elected to the CESAER Board for a 3-year term.

#### Health, Safety & Wellbeing

The University Secretary & Compliance Officer (USCO) gave an update, noting the following points:

- The Principal had sent letters to the three major construction companies operating on or near the University estate, emphasising the importance of health and safety issues on campus. Replies had been received from two of them to date (Keir Group and Balfour Beatty), with re-affirmations of those companies' commitments to good practice.
- Recognising the risks introduced by construction works, Glasgow City Council had agreed to temporary pedestrianisation of a section of North Portland Street, commencing on Monday 2 December.
- In the wake of a recent fire at privately provided student accommodation in Bolton, the Scottish Funding Council had asked all higher education institutions to confirm that any cladding on their own buildings had been tested for appropriate fire resistance. The University was already in a position to provide this confirmation and would be seeking similar reassurances also from local private providers of student accommodation.

## **4. Financial Statements 2018/19**

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented an overview of the Financial Statements 2018/19, which had been considered by Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) at its meeting on 1 November 2019.

The accounts showed the University to have the financial strength to resource major investments and take advantage of new opportunities. There had been good year-on-year growth in non-SFC income, including notable growth in tuition fee income. The University's cash position was good, with significant headroom on

debt covenants at year-end. Good financial governance would be critical going forward, to maintain the headroom set out in the financial forecast approved in June 2019.

Increased underlying expenditure reflected strategic investment in support of the University's growth and development. It was noted that the overall expenditure figure included the £74.8M deficit recovery provision for the USS pension scheme, which the University was required to report at year-end by the FRS102 accounting standards and agreed sector-wide accounting methodology in relation to USS. This constituted a significant year-on-year increase, but would be reversed by approximately £46M (c.40% of the current year charge) with the introduction of the 2018 USS valuation in the new financial year. Both the increase and the reversal were in line with sector norms. The underlying balance sheet position was stable overall.

In the course of discussion, the national structures around the USS scheme were outlined, including the ongoing work of the Joint Expert Panel, the outcomes of which could change the level of debt recovery provision required of the University. Members also discussed the types of financing used by or available to the University.

The Treasurer and the Vice-Convener (as Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee) noted that there had been good engagement with the External Auditor, who had delivered a clean audit report with no adjusting items. Members commended the finance team for achieving this outcome. Other matters discussed during the audit process had included the USS pension scheme, revenue recognition, going concern, and the disclosure of the Principals remuneration, elements of which had changed this year.

Court **approved** the Financial Statements and authorised the relevant officers to sign the printed statements.

## 5. Q1 Business Report

The Chief Financial Officer summarised key financial elements of the Q1 Business Report 2019/20. There had been strong year-on-year growth, including a 16% increase in tuition fee income, which would enable the University to absorb increased costs. This was forecast to result in a surplus before other gains & losses of £3.5M, which was £1.5M higher than budget. The underlying surplus was effectively unchanged from the Budget, excluding non-cash upside from depreciation. The University's cash position was forecast to be slightly higher than budget and the headroom on debt covenants was being maintained according to the budget.

The Director of Strategy & Policy noted minor changes that had been made to the form of the report as a result of an annual review process and gave an overview of the non-financial elements of the report. In particular, it was noted that

- marginally increased academic staff turnover was consistent with the current stage of the REF cycle;
- indicators relating to undergraduate and taught postgraduate populations all exceeded targeted levels at Q1;
- while measures relating to research postgraduate numbers retained red or amber flags, indicating a forecast shortfall relative to stretching targets, Q1 levels of recruitment had increased on a year-on-year basis; and
- Widening Access indicators relating to the population from SIMD 0-20 areas were extremely positive, showing progress well ahead of the targets set by the Commission on Widening Access (notwithstanding small variations in definitions used).

Members noted the significant increase in tuition fee income and achievement of the target in this area and also commented positively on the increase in research postgraduate numbers. Members noted that debt covenants were receiving proportionate attention.

Court **noted** the Q1 Business Report.

## 6. Preparations for REF 2021

Professor Stephen McArthur, Deputy Associate Principal, gave an overview of preparations for the Research Excellence Framework exercise (REF) 2021, the results of which would influence the levels of SFC Research Excellence Grant funding for subsequent years and have significant reputational impact. Members were given

a summary of changes to the REF since the last REF exercise, the timetable for REF preparation and submission and an overview of the University's approach to forecasting and optimising REF performance.

Robust processes were in place to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Members were shown examples of the snapshot reporting used to monitor performance in each Unit of Assessment (UoA) and a summary of the current performance forecast.

Subsequent discussion focused on the following points:

- The Principal and other Senior Officers were receiving regular detailed updates from the REF team.
- The REF team was appropriately resourced. The importance of this was recognised and it was kept under review at the highest levels.
- Completion by research postgraduate students was an important factor in the scoring of Environment statements. The University was monitoring this and promoting timely completion. Strathclyde was believed to be in line with leading research-intensive universities on this measure.
- The University had a network of experienced staff and advisors bringing insight into the priorities of REF panels in different UoAs.
- While inevitably a high priority, the REF did not define the extent of the University's performance management. In addition to individual performance management through Accountability and Development Reviews, contribution maps had been created, facilitating detailed analysis of performance across the institution and driving continuous improvement.

CBG **noted** the University's preparations for the REF exercise.

## **7. Strategic Plans and Outcome Agreement**

The Director of Strategy & Policy introduced this three-part update comprising: a Year 5 progress report on the University's 2020 KPI targets; a near-final 2025 Strategy document; and an outline draft of the University's new Outcome Agreement for 2020-21.

The Year 5 2020 KPI progress report highlighted the University's strong performance against demanding targets, with a number of KPIs now marked as 'target achieved', a year ahead of completion of the strategy period. A final 'wrap up' report against these 2020 targets would be brought back to Court in a year, to close off the 2015-2020 Strategy.

In introducing the draft 2025 Strategic Plan, the Director of Strategy & Policy emphasised the significant further development work undertaken since Court saw an initial draft in October: KPIs and targets had been developed and feature boxes populated, with wide input from Executive Team, faculties, committees and the Student Executive. The main strategy document would be complemented by dedicated strategies in a number of key areas.

While there was much continuity from the successful current strategy, the KPIs reflected new levels of ambition. There were new KPIs in areas such as the gender pay gap and action on climate change. It was also noted that a new measure would be employed for research citations, to better capture individual contributions and account for the influence of large research consortia. Members were invited to provide feedback on the current draft and informed that a further, near-final draft would be circulated to Court before the end of the calendar year, with the aim of finalising and launching the new strategy early in 2020.

Members commended the strategy document, welcoming in particular the prominence of certain themes, including public engagement and strategic partnerships with industry. It was noted that the strategy aligned well with Scottish Government priorities as well as the needs of other stakeholders. Members suggested that certain matters might be given more prominence, including international business engagement and the University's investment in staff.

The Director of Strategy & Policy also directed members' attention to the draft Outcome Agreement for 2020-21, noting that a 'well developed draft' had to be submitted to the SFC by 13 December 2019 and highlighting that a revised draft would be brought back to Court for consideration prior to the final deadline in April 2020.

Court **approved** the draft 2025 Strategic Plan in principle and **noted** the 2018-19 KPIs Progress Report and the draft Outcome Agreement.

### **Items for formal approval**

#### **8. Revised Charter and Statutes**

The USCO outlined key changes to the Charter and Statutes, which were required in order to ensure compliance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, and the process for amending the Charter and Statutes, involving a formal resolution of Court ahead of approval by the Privy Council.

Court **approved** the formal resolutions to amend the Charter and Statutes and **delegated authority** to Court Business Group to consider any proposed amendments to the wording of the Charter or Statutes that the Privy Council might seek.

#### **9. Schedule of Delegated Authority**

The USCO presented the proposed revision of the Schedule of Delegated Authority (SoDA) and plans for related work.

Court **approved** the text of the revised SoDA and the proposed new approach to recording authorised signatories and sub-delegations and **noted** the intention to carry out a more fundamental review and revision of the SoDA. In addition, Court **agreed** that the SoDA should be included in the annual review of key Court documents.

#### **10. Appointment to Remuneration Committee**

Court **approved** the recommendation of Court Membership Group that Marion Venman be appointed to the Remuneration Committee.

#### **11. Annual Statement of Research Integrity**

The Associate Principal (Research & Innovation) outlined the purpose and value of the Annual Statement of Research Integrity, noting that Court approval of this document was a requirement of the UUK Concordat on Research Integrity.

Court **approved** the Annual Statement of Research Integrity.

#### **12. Change of local infrastructure partner in UAE**

Court **approved** the application for a branch campus licence for Strathclyde Business School operations in Dubai, partnering with Tecom, which had been previously approved by Senate, and **approved** the signing of the formal resolution to effect this.

### **Items for information**

#### **13. Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015): Annual Update**

Court **noted** the annual update on the implementation of the Prevent requirements under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015) and action taken by the University to ensure continued compliance.

#### **14. Court meeting dates 2020/21**

Court **noted** the Court meeting dates for the academic year 2020/21.

## **Committee Reports**

Court received and **noted** the following committee reports:

### **15. Executive Team**

### **16. Court Business Group**

### **17. Audit & Risk Committee** (including the Audit & Risk Committee's Annual Report to Court)

The Vice-Convenor, in her capacity as Convenor of the Audit & Risk Committee, briefly summarised key points from the report, noting in particular that the contract for the University's external auditor was shortly to be put to tender. Court would receive a recommendation for the appointment of an external auditor at its March 2020 meeting.

### **18. Staff Committee**

### **19. Estates Committee**

### **20. AOB**

Members enquired whether recent civil unrest in Hong Kong had had an impact on the University. Court was informed that the University had monitored the situation closely and had recalled seven Strathclyde students who had been taking part in exchange programmes in Hong Kong. The Principal had been in contact with the Vice-Chancellors of partner institutions in Hong Kong and had offered appropriate support.

### **Date of next meeting**

- Tuesday, 3 March 2020

## UNIVERSITY COURT – NOTE OF STRATEGY SESSION 28 - 29 November 2019

### Thursday 28 November

#### 1. Opening Remarks

The Convener briefly introduced the Strategy Session, welcoming members and attendees.

#### 2. Reflections on performance in 2018/19 and building our strategic plan for Vision 2025

The Principal delivered a presentation on the University's journey to 2025, tracking progress through the history of the University, through the different strategic horizons of recent years and towards the targeted achievements of the new strategic plan.

#### 3. Guest speakers

Chancellor's Fellows from the four Faculties:

*Dr Matthew Hannon, Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, Strathclyde Business School*

*Dr Charles Macleod, Electronic & Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering*

*Dr Zahra Rattray, Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy & Biomedical Sciences, Faculty of Science*

*Dr Stefanie Reher, Government & Public Policy, Faculty of Humanities & Social Science*

The four speakers outlined their research and the ways in which their Chancellor's Fellowships were facilitating significant achievements. Common themes included the contribution of the fellowship to capturing new research funding and building new collaborations, both within and beyond the University, which in turn led to significant external impact.

#### 4. After-dinner speaker

Following dinner, Professor Sir John Curtice delivered a talk on recent research on the potential of organised deliberation to adjust and align social and political attitudes.

### Friday 29 November

#### 5. Introduction and welcome

The Convener welcomed Court members and attendees to the second day of the Strategy Session and offered congratulations to all on the University's winning two THE Awards the previous evening: Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year (for the Breaking Barriers programme) and University of the Year. Members heard that the judging panel for University of the Year had cited "a scale of ambition that has multiplied rapidly over the past decade" and the University's "expansive, inclusive and collaborative approach" and "unconventional institutional mindset".

## **'People and programmes'**

### **6. People Strategy**

The Chief People Officer gave an overview of relevant developments, including the following:

- The Values Survey had shown an increase in the percentage of staff who agreed that each of the Values accurately reflected the University, with a notable increase with regard to 'People Orientated' in particular.
- The new People Strategy would be built on (1) the Values; (2) five strategic themes; and (3) the Strathclyde Staff Pledge, incorporating commitments on fair work, equality, safety and the staff voice.
- The 'Thrive @ Strathclyde' initiative would bring a number of co-ordinated actions on staff wellbeing.
- Further plans included a new succession planning model, progressive innovations in recruitment and a new 'shared success' staff reward scheme.

Subsequent discussion focused on the following points:

- The University had a number of internal mentoring schemes, including 'family-friendly mentoring' for those returning from maternity leave.
- Peer support arrangements existed, but could be expanded in some areas.
- Some potential measures to enhance recruitment could be difficult to implement in academic settings but this should not discourage innovation.
- The University would continue to work on ways to engage with existing staff, for example through improved internal communications and review and reform of development reviews.

### **7. Workforce planning**

The Acting Director of HR outlined the University's approach to workforce planning, in the context of its ambitious strategic targets, noting that this must take account of:

- affordability and sustainability;
- skills gaps;
- impact on estates;
- future ways of working; and
- opportunities and challenges from automation and innovation.

### **8. Policy@Strathclyde**

The Executive Dean of Humanities & Social Sciences gave an overview of the Policy @ Strathclyde initiative, noting that:

- through its 'spoke and hub' model, Policy@Strathclyde supported twelve policy centres within the University;
- a launch event in September 2019 had been well attended;
- a new Executive Director was in place; and
- all the programmes run under Policy@Strathclyde had been mapped to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Executive Dean of Strathclyde Business School was thanked for his significant contribution to the development of Policy@Strathclyde.

Discussion centred on the importance of publicising Strathclyde's strengths in this area. It was noted that the Policy@Strathclyde model should help to achieve this, by creating critical mass in Strathclyde's engagement with policy makers.



## **9. Health & Care Futures**

Professor Roma Maguire (Professor of Digital Health and Care) presented an overview of the Health & Care Futures initiative, which was due to be launched in early 2020. Similarly to Policy@Strathclyde, this would link together existing work in many parts of the University, making the University's offer and contribution more visible, stimulating more engagement with external stakeholders and encouraging collaboration.

In discussion, members noted the significant opportunities and demand for innovation in health care training, processes and digital tools. Relationships with stakeholders would be crucial; Strathclyde had already developed highly constructive partnerships from which further opportunities were likely to grow.

## **10. Centre for Sustainable Development**

Professor Anja Lowit (Deputy Associate Principal) delivered a presentation on the creation of the Centre for Sustainable Development. Like Policy@Strathclyde and Health & Care Futures, this would co-ordinate and market existing work in different parts of the University. In so doing, it was expected to bring about new collaborative opportunities in both research and learning and teaching and to generate new funding applications, in a context of significant wider investment in this area.

'Sustainable' was to be widely interpreted in this context, encompassing economic, social and environmental sustainability. The UN SDGs provided a framework for capturing and stimulating relevant work.

In discussion, it was noted that universities were widely seen to have a key role to play in promoting sustainability, not only in providing technological and policy solutions to relevant challenges, but also in catalysing government action. Members noted that many businesses would welcome a lead on sustainability from the University in the course of its dealings with them. It was noted that the University should consider how it reported its own sustainability, for which a number of standard reporting methods were available.

## **11. Innovation Districts**

The Chief Commercial Officer gave an overview of progress in the development of the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District (AMID) and Glasgow City Innovation District (GCID).

Within AMID, the National Manufacturing Institute of Scotland (NMIS) had begun a recruitment campaign. Appointments had been made to senior positions and there had been high interest in technical posts. A membership model for NMIS would be launched in 2020. An industrial doctorate programme had been created with additional funding from the Scottish Funding Council. The design for the NMIS building had been adapted, on the basis of new Salix funding, and as a result had received the PRIAM Outstanding rating for sustainability. The Lightweight Manufacturing Centre had opened in August 2019, in temporary facilities.

The GCID cluster model was well established and providing effective channels to communicate the University's strengths and successes to partners. The social impact of GCID was a major consideration in plans for its further development. A full business case for the next phase of GCID would be brought to Court in March 2020.

## **12. Financial monitoring**

The Chief Financial Officer outlined key aspects of financial monitoring and aims for the future development of the University's financial capabilities, to support targeted growth by 2025.

The importance of compliance with the University's loan covenants was emphasised. All parts of the University would have a responsibility to help mitigate any un-budgeted additional costs and to agree appropriate use of any additional income or savings.

The University would be moving internally to monthly accounts in the medium term, creating more efficient finance processes and generating improved management information. In the longer term, financial reporting would be developed such that key information would be more accessible to non-finance colleagues.

Discussion focused on ways to meet the University's future needs in the area of finance. Where possible, processes should be automated, freeing personnel to take on more value-adding tasks. Systems requirements would be assessed, to ensure appropriate support for the growth of the University to its 2025 targets.

## **13. Breakout Sessions and feedback**

Members and attendees formed small groups to discuss six topics of importance to the University in the context of the new strategic plan. Following this, members of each breakout group presented summaries of their respective groups' discussions and suggestions that emerged from them.

### The journey to a net-zero-carbon campus

To meet the significant challenge of achieving a step-change reduction in carbon emissions towards net-zero would require a systematic approach, encompassing locally developed and collaborative approaches. To progress this, it would be important to carefully analyse each part of the estate to identify concrete measures that could be taken within a supporting University-wide framework. This work would be progressed through development of a Climate Change and Social Responsibility Plan in early 2020.

### Digital education and student experience

Existing Graduate Apprenticeship and other work-based learning models provided a successful foundation from which to develop new online collaborative education partnerships. The new L&T building would also bring new possibilities for digital learning and teaching environments. A key challenge would be ensuring that new offerings were appropriately tailored to employers' needs while being financially and academically viable for the University. The group saw potential for increased co-ordination and engagement across the Faculties and professional services.

### Internationalisation

The group considered several dimensions of internationalisation and noted that these were interconnected with one another and with the University's overall reputation. Discussion focused on the need to understand the requirements of different markets and stakeholder groups and how to achieve this.

## Communications and marketing the strategy to 2025

The group identified a range of key stakeholders and particularly emphasised among these the potential for using Court members' contacts, in particular industry-level organisations, to publicise the University's strategy and ethos and its offer to potential partners. The group also stressed the importance of 'sales' skills throughout the institution, in order to engage effectively with potential partners.

## Industry and Commercialisation

The University was widely recognised for the strength of its industry engagement. The importance of building relationships at different levels within partner organisations was noted. Further development of industry engagement would require an expansion of relevant skills among academic and research staff, in addition to appropriate support systems. Developing the University's approach to account management would require collaboration between academic and professional services colleagues.

## Inclusive Strathclyde

The group explored issues of race equality in the University community, with a particular focus on developing inclusive and diverse learning and working environments. The group agreed on the importance of engaging with different communities to understand potential barriers to inclusion and to develop impactful policies and practice. There was also a need to acknowledge and better understand under-representation and student attainment gaps. Suggested actions included the establishment of a university-wide race equality group and the provision of dedicated social and networking spaces on campus for under-represented groups.

## **14. Conclusions**

The Principal and the Convener brought the Strategy Session to a close.

The Principal thanked Court members and attendees for their close engagement and active participation in discussions, noting the importance of Court's strategic guidance.

The Convener reflected on the University's success in recent years, as recognised in the University of the Year award that had been bestowed on the University for the second time the previous evening. Through the successful strategy to date, the maintenance of its levels of ambition and adherence to its values, Strathclyde was living up to its status as a leading international technological university and as a socially progressive institution.

DW, 05 December 2019