

## MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT 3 March 2020

**Present:** Dame Sue Bruce (Convener), Paula Galloway (Vice-Convener) (by telephone), Professor Sir Jim McDonald (Principal), Dr Jeremy Beeton, Ronnie Cleland, Amanda Corrigan, Alison Culpán (items 1-6), Gillian Hastings, Stephen Ingledew, Susan Kelly, Professor Scott MacGregor, Councillor Ruairi Kelly, Peter Young

**Attending:** Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Douglas Brodie, Adrian Gillespie, Sandra Heidinger, Professor Atilla Incecik, Dr Veena O'Halloran, Professor Eleanor Shaw, Rona Smith, Professor Iain Stewart, Steven Wallace, Dr Daniel Wedgwood, Professor Robert Stewart (item 4), Dr Olga Kozlova (item 7), Claire Carroll (item 8), Professor Stephen McArthur (item 8), Gordon Scott (item 9),

**Apologies:** Dr Archie Bethel, Kayla-Megan Burns, Matt Crilly, Dr Kathy Hamilton, Dr Neil McGarvey, Dr Katharine Mitchell, Gillian Pallis, Malcolm Roughead, Heather Stenhouse, Marion Venman, Brenda Wyllie

### Welcome and apologies

The Convener 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 28 November 2019.

### 2. Matters arising

- Privy Council approval of revised Charter and Statutes  
The Privy Council had granted its approval for revisions to the University's Charter and Statutes on 12 February 2020, on the basis of the resolution passed at the Court meeting on 28 November 2019. Members noted that, as stated throughout the process, Court would be compliant with the provisions on its composition (Statute 2.1.5) from 1 August 2020. All other amendments would apply with immediate effect.

### 3. Principal's Report

#### Vision 2025 launch

The University's new Strategic Plan, Vision 2025, had been launched at a very well attended staff event in the Barony Hall on Monday 3 February. Graduates of the University and of Breaking Barriers had given inspiring speeches, reminding attendees of the transformative potential of the University. The Principal thanked the Associate Principal, Education & Enterprise for hosting the event and thanked the Vice-Convener, Senior Deputy Convener and Treasurer for representing Court on the day.

#### Industrial Action

The UCU had initiated 14 days of strike action on 20 February, which was on-going at the time of the meeting. This was a continuation of action based on ballots concerning both the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and the 2019/20 national pay negotiations (encompassing workload, casualisation and equality). The

Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) Union had also announced five days of industrial action in February and March, in relation to the 2019/20 national pay negotiations. The Principal and Chief People Officer (CPO) had met with the Chief executive of Universities UK to discuss the University's preferred outcomes, both of the main grounds for the action being subject to national negotiations. The Principal commended the CPO's handling of an isolated incident of unacceptable behaviour on the picket lines.

The Vice-Principal outlined the University's efforts to monitor the extent and impact of the strike action and to minimise disruption to students, co-ordinated through an industrial action planning group. It was noted that the UCU's mandate for strike action would expire on 29 April, meaning that a further ballot would be required for any action thereafter.

#### Queen's Anniversary Prize ceremony and dinner

The Queen's Anniversary Prize had been awarded to the University at a ceremony held at Buckingham Palace, which was attended by the Principal, Chancellor, Senior Deputy Convener, three senior professors from the field of energy research and five of the University's research students.

#### Government engagement

In his capacity as a member of the Council on Science and Technology, the Principal was due to meet a number of high-ranking figures in the UK Government, including the new Chancellor of the Exchequer and Higher Education Minister.

The Principal and the Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) had attended an event with the First Minister at a new facility belonging to one of the University's industrial partners, Spirit Aerospace, with whom the University signed a major research partnership on the same day.

The University had welcomed Ivan McKee, the Scottish Government's Minister for Trade, Investment & Innovation, to TIC/Inovo on 15 January, to officially open the new offices of EnMovi, a new Scottish subsidiary of US firm OrthoSensor, with whom Strathclyde had a longstanding relationship.

#### Scottish Government budget

The draft Scottish budget had brought a 1.84% cash-terms increase in the resource budget across sector and a rise in the capital budget of 9.9% in cash terms. This remained to be confirmed, as the Scottish budget had, unusually, preceded the UK budget; in-year adjustments might be used to deal with any resulting shift in expectations. Based on initial discussions between the sector and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on the allocation of available funds, it was expected that Strathclyde's SFC funding would see a modest increase.

#### UK withdrawal from the EU

The UK had formally left the EU but a variety of scenarios remained possible for the UK's future relationship with the EU. The University had planned for different outcomes through its Brexit Business Continuity Group and the on-going work of the Strathclyde EU Exit Working and Advisory Group (SEEWAG), taking advice from external agencies including Universities UK and Universities Scotland. Communication with students and EU staff had been prioritised and would continue. Access to Horizon Europe research funding and the ERASMUS+ programme remained subject to international negotiations. The Scottish Government's Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, Richard Lochhead, had recently expressed support for ERASMUS+ and had suggested that, if necessary, Scotland might seek to engage directly to maintain some form of participation.

#### Immigration policy

A Tier 1 Global Talent visa scheme had been approved by the UK Cabinet. This was expected to help the University to attract leading academics through the Strathclyde Global Talent Attraction Programme.

#### Grants

The University had recently won a number of very significant research grants, including a major Scottish Government grant to Professor Robert Stewart, who would speak later in the meeting.

#### Health, Safety & Wellbeing

The University Secretary & Compliance Officer (USCO) updated Court on the University's response to the global COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak. The situation was being monitored continuously, on the basis of

advice from public health authorities and a wide range of partner organisations, and communications with students and staff were kept up-to-date accordingly. In line with national advice, the current focus was on hand hygiene as a preventative measure. Hand sanitisers had been installed on campus in areas of high footfall.

The University had had an incident response team in place since January and had plans in place in case of any need to enable isolation of any students within student residences, with appropriate support for anyone affected. Contingency plans had been created for business continuity in case of a local outbreak. A staff member with senior experience in the World Health Organisation was advising. Contingencies were being developed in case of an outbreak during the examination and graduation season. The University had recently expanded its Risk & Resilience team, giving more capacity to prepare appropriately.

The University and the Students' Union were in communication with the University's three associations for Chinese students and had sent a joint message of support to them. A message to global alumni was in preparation. Personal communication was being maintained with students who were known to have home addresses in Hubei Province.

#### **4. Research and innovation presentation: 5G**

Professor Robert Stewart delivered a presentation on the University's work in 5G technologies, focusing on the use of 'shared spectrum' to provide connectivity beyond the major commercial networks. Strathclyde was a recognised leader in this area, having led the development of shared spectrum from proof of concept to major national and international projects. This had significant disruptive potential, bringing substantial opportunities for the University and others.

5G was recognised as one of the University's research and innovation clusters and also interacted in significant ways with the other clusters, to mutual benefit.

The Convener commended the University's leading role in this important technology. The following points were raised in subsequent discussion:

- Concerns over reliance on technologies from foreign state companies provided additional challenges in the development of mobile networks, with a need to address security, technical and economic factors and to balance political pressures from multiple directions.
- Interaction between the 5G and Quantum research clusters was crucial, given the importance of very accurate timing in 5G. The Glasgow City Innovation District was to include a Timing Hub that would contribute significantly to the further development of work in 5G.
- The social and economic outcomes of 5G projects were being investigated with a charity partner. Models developed for community windfarms could be applied in community 5G projects, to deliver and monitor local benefit.
- Strathclyde's approach had great potential for use in other countries and many governments had funds or access to funds for infrastructure development that could back up demand for shared spectrum 5G networks. It was noted that Strathclyde was already pursuing relevant work with a number of overseas governments.

#### **5. Preparations for COP26**

Professor Tim Bedford outlined the University's preparations for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) which was to be held in Glasgow later this year. Taking into account the main conference and satellite events, this would be a very large-scale undertaking, expected to involve around 30,000 delegates and the leaders of 197 nations and territories.

The University had applied for Accredited Observer status and would be running its own programme of events, showcasing its world-leading research and transformative innovation and impact in climate change science, engineering and policy. The University would also host significant events for other organisations, including the Under2 Coalition, a network of regional and state governments operating below nation-state level. In conjunction with its partners, the University aimed to use the opportunity provided by COP26 to increase climate literacy in the University and beyond, to inform and accelerate climate action, and to deliver a significant legacy from the event.

To ensure preparations were co-ordinated, a steering group had been created, which would report to the Executive Team. This was working in parallel with and in contact with the working group preparing the University's Climate Change & Social Responsibility Plan, ensuring alignment between different strands of work that centred on climate action.

Court **noted** the University's preparations for COP26 and commend progress made to date.

**6. Performance Reporting: Q2 Business Report 2019/20, Strategic Plan mid-year progress report and Outcome Agreement 2020/21**

[Reserved]

**7. TIC Zone Development within the Glasgow City Innovation District**

[Reserved]

## **8. REF 2021: Submission Development Report**

Professor Stephen McArthur (Deputy Associate Principal, Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation) and Claire Carroll (Research Manager) provided an update on progress with the REF 2021 submission, including current forecast performance.

The current quarter had been identified as a key stage for interventions to enhance the REF submission in each Unit of Assessment (UoA). Current priorities were to maximise the quality of impact case studies and environment statements. Court was shown examples of the REF team's Unit of Assessment analyses, used for detailed assessment and forecasting of REF performance and for driving improvement.

It was explained that forecast performance was calculated on the basis of the assessments of expert academic reviewers, comparisons with REF 2014 and benchmarking against appropriate comparator institutions. Forecasting was being pursued on a cautious basis, avoiding bias towards optimistic assumptions.

It was noted that the REF team had benefited from good engagement across the University, the importance of the exercise being widely recognised and understood as a facet of the University's unambiguously research-intensive character. Based on experience from the successful 2014 REF exercise, process improvements had been made to enable earlier intervention in UOAs and to benefit from new sources of external advice.

The Convener thanked the REF team for their efforts and for keeping Court informed and requested that a further update be provided at the June Court meeting.

Court **noted** current and planned preparations for REF2021 and current forecasts of performance.

### **Items for formal approval**

## **9. Digital Transformation at Strathclyde: HR/Payroll System Replacement to underpin Vision 2025**

The CPO and Acting Director of HR outlined the business case to procure and successfully implement a new modern HR/Payroll solution. The new system would address the substantial business continuity risks associated with maintaining the existing system, on which many other University systems depended. It would also significantly enhance the employee lifecycle experience and streamline existing business processes. A nine-month discovery phase had been completed, including extensive consultation to establish key business needs and opportunities for improvement.

Court approved the business case for a new HR/Payroll system.

## **10. Convener's Action: Appointment of Associate Principal and temporary re-appointment for Associate Principal & Executive Dean**

The USCO outlined the two recent appointments of Associate Principals, the temporary re-appointment of HaSS Executive Dean and the Convener's prior endorsement and approval of these appointments on behalf of Court, as required by relevant protocols.

Court:

- **Noted** the appointment, in line with relevant recruitment protocol, of Professor Eleanor Shaw as Associate Principal, Education & Enterprise;
- **Homologated** the Convener's endorsement, on behalf of Court of the appointment of Professor Douglas Brodie as Associate Principal, Social Impact and Progression; and
- **Homologated** the Convener's approval of the temporary re-appointment of Professor Brodie as Associate Principal & Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, until a new occupant is appointed to that role or, at the latest, 30 September 2020.

### **Committee Reports**

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

#### **11. Executive Team**

#### **12. Senate**

#### **13. Court Business Group**

#### **14. Court Membership Group**

Court **approved** amendments to the terms of reference of Enterprise & Investment Committee (EIC) and the Statutory Advisory Committee on Safety and Occupational Health (SACSOH).

Court **approved** the appointment of Gillian Hastings as Convener of EIC and Peter Young as Convener of SACSOH. The Convener thanked both for agreeing to take on these additional responsibilities.

#### **15. Audit & Risk Committee**

The Vice-Convener, as Convener of Audit & Risk Committee (ARC), and the CFO outlined the process used to appoint an external auditor, the result of which was that ARC was recommending the re-appointment of EY. It was noted that the relationship would be re-set through the re-appointment and that EY would be refreshing their audit team. Court **approved** the re-appointment of EY as the University's external auditor.

#### **16. Estates Committee**

#### **17. Enterprise & Investment Committee**

#### **18. Staff Committee**

#### **19. Remuneration Committee**

#### **20. AOB**

There was no other business raised.

### **Date of next meeting**

- Tuesday, 5 May 2020