

MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT

11 May 2021

Meeting held by videoconference

Present: Dame Sue Bruce (Convener), Paula Galloway (Vice-Convener), Professor Sir Jim McDonald (Principal), Virginia Beckett, Dr Jeremy Beeton, Ronnie Cleland, Alison Culpan, Andrew Eccles, Gillian Hastings, Stephen Ingledew, Dr Barbara Keating, Susan Kelly, Professor Scott MacGregor, William McLachlan, Dr Katharine Mitchell, Malcolm Roughead, Heather Stenhouse, Marion Venman

Attending: Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Douglas Brodie, Adrian Gillespie, Professor David Hillier, Professor Atilla Incecik, Manish Joshi, Dr Veena O'Halloran, Benn Rapson, Professor Ian Rivers, Gordon Scott, Professor Eleanor Shaw, Rona Smith, Professor Iain Stewart, Steven Wallace, Dr Daniel Wedgwood

Apologies: Linda Brownlow, Kayla-Megan Burns, Chelbi Hillan, Cllr Ruairi Kelly, Peter Young

Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed Court members and attendees to the meeting.

No interests were declared.

1. Minutes

Court **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising, other than those covered in the main agenda.

3. Principal's Report [taken as item 4]

The Principal noted that the Director of Strategy & Policy, Rona Smith, would be leaving the University in the summer to take up a position at the University of Edinburgh. He expressed his thanks for her many important contributions at Strathclyde and wished her well in her new role.

The process for appointing the preferred candidate to a new Senior Officer role was nearly complete and an announcement was due to be made soon. The Convener and the Senior Deputy Convener had participated in the recruitment process. The role was to be designated Chief Digital & Information Officer, subject to Court's approval later in the meeting.

The University's Global Talent recruitment scheme had attracted a large and diverse field of strong applicants from across the world. The selection and recruitment process was in progress.

The University Secretary & Compliance Officer (USCO) gave an overview of developments in the University's management of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Scottish Government had recently reduced Covid-19 protection levels and had published plans to further relax restrictions if public health outcomes allowed. Planning was in progress for the new academic year, taking into account a range of scenarios. The University, alongside other representatives of the HE sector, continued to engage regularly with the Scottish Government over the safe arrival and housing of students and other key issues. On-campus activity with certain levels of social

distancing was expected to be possible in the autumn, but it was recognised that these assumptions could be subject to significant change, depending on the course of the pandemic nationally and globally.

Court **noted** the report.

4. COP26 Update

The Associate Principal (Research & Innovation) gave a presentation to update Court on the University's preparations for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26, which was to be held in Glasgow later in the year. The presentation focused on the University's communications plan, planned events and the development of key partnerships.

In subsequent discussion, it was noted that:

- the University was working with key partners on an international scale, including through a major conference with the CESAER network;
- the University's COP26 activities would complement its strategic work on entrepreneurship and innovation, with early stage ideas in relevant areas stimulated from the student and researcher communities and engagement with SMEs over promising technologies;
- innovation in finance and policy had a key role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and Strathclyde was well placed to be a leader in this and, more broadly, promoting systems approaches to tackling climate change.

Court **noted** the proposed activity.

5. Budget Setting: context and process

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented an update on the high-level budget process for the coming academic year. This was to culminate in presentation of the budget for approval by Court at the 17 June Court meeting. An adaptive modelling process would enable uncertainties in the current global context to be taken into account and risks would be assessed and highlighted accordingly. Initial reviews of forecast income had been completed. Additional resource requests were being considered and ranked by priority as part of the budget process.

Members noted the importance of estimating student recruitment at a time of global uncertainty. The CFO noted that colleagues in Finance, Strategy & Policy, the Recruitment and International Office and the Faculties were engaged in gathering, monitoring and analysis of rich market intelligence in order to reduce risk and uncertainty in this area as far as possible.

Court **noted** the update.

6. University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) Audited Account 2019/20

The Chief Executive of USSA presented the student association's annual accounts, in compliance with statutory requirements to make the accounts available to Court. It was noted that USSA had a strong cash position and had seen good underlying commercial performance, despite the impact of the pandemic for part of the relevant financial year, but the accounts showed an overall deficit, primarily due to pensions liabilities.

It was noted that the planned relocation of the students' union into the new Learning & Teaching Building would create significant new opportunities, both commercially and in service provision. New initiatives would support inclusiveness and student wellbeing, with an initial focus on the needs of students particularly affected by the pandemic. It was noted that the University's work in connection with the Learner Journey would complement the Students' Association's work in these areas.

Court **noted** the financial statements.

Items for formal approval

7. Corporate Risk Register

The USCO presented the Corporate Risk Register (CRR). The previously separate Covid-19 Risk Register had been integrated into the main CRR and the opportunity had been taken by risk owners, as part of this process, to adjust the risk ratings in certain areas to reflect the impacts of the pandemic and resulting levels of uncertainty. The CRR would continue to be developed, to produce a register that fully implemented the University's new approach for the October meeting of Court.

Discussing the wider context, members noted that risks associated with cyber crime were increasing globally. The USCO noted that the University had a strong cyber security strategy and that specialist colleagues were constantly monitoring known threats and new developments and working with the rest of the sector and other agencies to ensure the best possible protections were in place. Cyber security training had been rolled out across the University.

Court **noted** the top risks.

8. Amendment to the Ordinances: Senior Officer job title

Court **approved** the proposed amendment to the Ordinances, enabling the new Senior Officer role to be established with the title Chief Digital and Information Officer and a corresponding remit.

Committee Reports

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

- 9. Executive Team**
- 10. Senate**
- 11. Court Business Group**
- 12. Audit & Risk Committee**
- 13. Enterprise & Investment Committee**
- 14. Estates Committee**
- 15. Remuneration Committee**

- 16. AOB**

There was no other business noted.

Date of next meeting

- Thursday 17 June 2021