

MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT
4 October 2018

- Present:** Dame Sue Bruce (Convener), Ronnie Cleland, Gillian Hastings, Dr Archie Bethel, Dr Jane Morgan, Alison Culpan, Susan Kelly, Kerry Alexander, Paula Galloway, Brenda Wyllie, Principal Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Vice-Principal Professor Scott MacGregor, Amanda Corrigan, Dr Kathy Hamilton, Dr Neil McGarvey, Dr Katharine Mitchell, Heather Stenhouse, Matt Crilly, Titi Farukuoye
- Attending:** Dr Veena O'Halloran, Hugh Darby (item 5), Adrian Gillespie (item 4), Professor David Hillier, Professor Iain Stewart, Professor Atilla Incecik, Professor Douglas Brodie, Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Sara Carter, Rona Smith (items 5 and 6), Sandra Heidinger, Chrissie Finnigan, Dan Wedgwood
- Apologies:** Dr Jeremy Beeton, Councillor David McDonald, Marion Venman, Malcolm Roughead, Gillian Pallis

Welcome and apologies

The Convener noted the apologies received and welcomed Court members and attendees to the meeting. The Convener warmly welcomed new members of University Court and acknowledged the new Strathclyde Sports Building as the venue for the meeting, noting that it had formally opened for the new academic year on 17 September 2018.

Paula Galloway declared a potential conflict of interest in relation to item 4 (National Manufacturing Institute of Scotland).

1. Minutes

Court **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2018.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Principal's Report

The Principal informed members of key activities and developments since the June 2018 meeting.

Student Inauguration Events: All new undergraduate students had been invited to attend the Student Inauguration events to welcome them into the Strathclyde community. The events had been well attended and the students had received a welcome message from the Principal, along with their Faculty Dean and the President of the University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA).

Learning and Teaching Building: The contractual commitments related to the Learning and Teaching Building had been concluded following discussion and negotiations with Balfour Beatty. The building was scheduled to open in summer 2020.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP) District Energy Scheme: It was expected that the new CHP system would be fully commissioned by the end of November 2018 and would play an important role in reducing the University's carbon footprint.

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR): Members noted an update on the University's preparations for the next ELIR. As with the previous ELIR, Court Member input would be sought to assist with the review of the ELIR Reflective Analysis (RA). Interested members were invited to share their interest with either the Convener of Court or the Vice-Principal.

UK Government Engagement: The University had welcomed two key members of the UK Government to Strathclyde over the summer including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, who had visited the Technology and Innovation Centre to announce a multi-million pounds investment in Quantum technology and 5G research. The University had also welcomed the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Sam Gyimah MP as part of his tour of UK Universities.

The UK's exit from the EU: The Principal highlighted that the University continues to monitor on-going developments via the Strathclyde EU Exit Working & Advisory Group and to engage directly with the UK and Scottish Governments, as well as through Universities Scotland and Universities UK. The Principal and USCO outlined the importance of continuing regular contact with students, who may be studying in an EU Member State at the time of the planned UK's exit, to address any concerns or worries they may have and to provide support and assistance. Members noted that FAQs and briefings would be prepared for students and that the University would work with USSA and relevant colleagues to take this forward. A recent event on "The economics of Brexit and why Glasgow needs to prepare" had been held by the Fraser of Allander Institute. Members agreed that it would be helpful to circulate the presentation materials from this event to Court Members.

Conference of European Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research (CESAER): The Principal would shortly host the 2018 CESAER General Assembly in Bucharest, reviewing progress over the first 10 months of his Presidency. The University had also recently welcomed around 50 Rectors and Presidents of European Universities of Science and Technology for their annual Conference in late September, with Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work, Derek Mackay MSP, opening the conference in the Technology and Innovation Centre.

UKVI audit: A UKVI audit of Tiers 1 and 4 (students) had recently taken place and a report including any recommendations for action, would follow shortly. The experience had been structured and professional, with the visiting team having a strong understanding of higher education. The audit outcome was anticipated to be communicated to the University within the next month. The related UKVI staff audit had been postponed due to lack of availability of the relevant auditor and was expected to take place before the end of the year.

Universities Superannuation Scheme: The Principal provided an update on the first report of the Joint Expert Panel on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) which had presented a retrospective review of the 2017 valuation, including an assessment of the methodology, assumptions and processes underpinning the valuation. The report had recommended:

- Retaining benefits at current levels except for the removal of the '1% match' (whereby members have the option to make an additional contribution to the USS Investment Builder of at least 1%, and the employer also makes a 1% additional contribution);
- Increasing employee contributions to 9.1% (currently 8%); and
- Increasing employer contributions to 20.1% (currently 18%).

These recommendations had been welcomed by the University, noting that they aligned with points stressed in employer consultations about USS. The formal consultation on proposed changes to future pension contribution rates remained open until 30 October – a draft response was being prepared and would be shared with Court Business Group Members prior to submission.

Pay negotiations and potential industrial action: Members noted that Universities and College Union (UCU) members would be balloted, until 19 October, for strike action following on from the national pay negotiations. UNISON members were being balloted separately. The University was considering the potential adverse impact of any subsequent strike action on the student experience and taking steps to mitigate any negative impact and minimise disruption.

University investment funds: The University, as part of its corporate social responsibilities and commitment to being socially progressive, would work with its investment managers to adopt a sustainable investment approach. This would seek to invest only in companies that positively managed the material impacts of their operations and products on the environment and society, were aligned with the UN Global Compact Principles and operated to appropriate environmental, social and governance principles.

Student and staff initiatives: Members noted an update on the allocation of salary costs retained during the recent Industrial Action, noting input provided by the USSA President. The Executive Team had decided that the salary costs associated with staff participating in the USS industrial action would be allocated to fund initiatives that support students and staff, to address disadvantage and create opportunities that do not already exist, in line with our socially progressive ethos.

Research Excellence Framework 2021: Members noted that preparations continued apace for the REF2021. An Institutional REF2021 Working Group (IRWG) had been set up to consider and provide strategic input and oversight.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing: The University Secretary and Compliance Officer (USCO) provided a summary of recent Health and Safety matters:

- The status of student and staff wellbeing as a University priority was outlined. It was noted that wellbeing would be a key focus of the new Sports Building.
- A case of meningitis had occurred on campus: the first year student was recovering well, the relevant protocol had been followed closely, and the risk was considered to have been minimised because of this careful management, with no other cases reported to date. Members noted that the professional and diligent approach, particularly of staff in SEES and Health, Safety and Wellbeing in handling the case, had been positively reported in the media.
- There had been concerns raised by USSA, Residences and Safety Staff about a perceived increase in substance abuse within the student residences. A zero-tolerance approach was being taken, with actions being taken, including raising awareness of the University's position on substance misuse through signage/posters.
- On Wednesday 10 October, the University would run an event as part of World Mental Health Day.
- Mental health support, including a focus on suicide prevention, continued to be a high priority area for students and the University would soon appoint a Mental Health Adviser with specialist expertise in this area.
- Alongside the Equally Safe Toolkit rollout across the sector, Universities Scotland had launched Gender Based Violence Cards which were in the process of being distributed across the University.
- USSA had taken steps to minimise the risk of drinks being spiked in the Student Union by making lids available for all drinks.

4. National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland (NMIS): Update

The Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) presented an update report on the final NMIS Business Case and reminded members that, on 20 June 2018, the University Court had considered and endorsed an outline business case for the National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland (NMIS). At that time, Court had agreed to delegate authority to Court Business Group (CBG) to approve the final business case, ahead of final consideration by Scottish Enterprise (SE). CBG approved the final business case on 12 September 2018 and the SE Board had granted conditional approval of the project on 25 September 2018.

Members noted that key changes since Court had considered the outline business case in June 2018, included an increase in the building costs. Members further noted that as not all of the available funding had been allocated in the outline business case, the increased costs would be fully affordable within the existing Scottish Government and UK HVM Catapult funding envelope. Additional funded elements that had contributed to increased forecast income included a programme for SME Engagement and costs for revenue generating temporary accommodation, prior to construction of the NMIS facility.

Members were advised that the risk register and an additional risk on political uncertainty linked to Brexit had been included. Risks associated with a potential future change in government had been mitigated, as

far as possible, by outlining in the agreement that any such risks would be shared proportionately by all partners.

Following discussion Court **homologated** Court Business Group's decision to approve the NMIS final business case.

5. Student Recruitment and fee income 2018/19

The Director of Strategy and Policy and Acting Chief Financial Officer (CFO) provided Court with an update on the current position regarding undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate student recruitment for 2018/19 and the evolving tuition fee income position.

Members noted that there had been increased demand across almost all groups and increasing competition across the sector for key groups. Against this backdrop, there had been continuing positive performance in widening access recruitment and the total combined Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 0-40 intake target for 2018-19 had again been achieved. Furthermore, the University's proportion of SIMD20 students was ahead of the Commission on Widening Access milestone for 2021. Positive progress had been made with regard to enhanced coordination between Faculties and Professional Services and Court Members noted the positive impact of this collaborative approach on the achievement of University targets.

Court noted that the final position on Rest of the UK (RUK) recruitment this year had been positive and that the University was close to target for recruitment of overseas undergraduates. The University was in a stronger position than last year for the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Secondary target, an area of ongoing sector-wide challenge in recruitment to particular subject areas. There had been progress with overseas postgraduate taught (PGT) recruitment, in particular. Furthermore, there had been evidence of improved conversion for postgraduate research (PGR) and recruitment was slightly ahead of the position at this point last year. It was noted that an updated picture would be presented to Court in November as part of the Q1 Business Reports.

Members considered a chart showing how tuition fee income was built up over the year and noted that for the financial year to date, cumulative gross tuition fee income was above that of the same point last year. Registrations were continuing and efforts would be made to ensure that all possible registrations would be completed by the end of October and, for courses starting later, during the remaining months of the financial year. An updated fees position would be reported to Court in November as part of the Q1 Business Reports.

6. Outcome Agreement 2017/18 self-evaluation and guidance for 2018/19

The Director of Strategy and Policy introduced the University's draft Outcome Agreement (OA) Self-evaluation Report (SER), for refinement prior to submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) by 31 October. An update was also provided on the plans to begin preparation on the University's Outcome Agreement for 2019-20.

Members noted that in anticipation of receipt of the updated SFC OA guidance for 2019-2020, which was expected sometime in the autumn, work had been initiated to develop the outline OA SER for 2017-18. All figures presented in the report would be subject to finalisation and refinement, ensuring all elements of the guidance were addressed prior to submission.

Court **approved** the direction of travel in preparing the Outcome Agreement Self-evaluation Report and **delegated** authority for final sign off to the Principal prior to the submission deadline of 31 October.

7. National Student Survey 2018

The Principal provided Court with an update on the National Student Survey (NSS) 2018 institutional performance and outlined that the University's scores had been disappointing.

The Executive Deans each provided an update on activity underway in their respective Faculties to address areas of concern at School and Departmental level. Each Dean had formulated an 'NSS: Dean's

Implementation Plan' and progress updates against actions outlined in those plans would be reported to the University Senate. Members noted the positive relationship between the University and USSA and that the the NSS would be a priority for the new Student Experience Committee, which would be chaired by the USSA President. .

The Principal reiterated the Executive Team's view and expectation that the trajectory of recent years needed to be reversed and stressed the importance of Faculty leadership in delivering an improved future position.

8. Court Strategy Session 2018 – initial planning

The Principal updated Court on the proposals for the format and structure of Court's November Strategy Session. A draft agenda would shortly be shared with the Convener of Court for her input.

The broad format proposed for the Strategy session was as follows:

- Principal's presentation of performance over the past year and 'horizons' viewpoint to 2025;
- Executive Deans and Professional Service Leads presentation on their 2025 vision;;
- Breakout sessions covering the five University Strategic Pillars, each led by a Senior Officer and a Court Member;
- Plenary session with feedback from the Senior Officer and Court leads.

The proposals were welcomed by Court members.

Items for formal approval

9. Proposal for the award of an Honorary Fellowship

The Principal introduced the proposal to nominate Sir William Lithgow, first Honorary President of the University of Strathclyde Students' Association and former member of the University Court (1963-69), for the award of Fellowship of the University, a gift of Court.

Court **approved** the nomination of Sir William Lithgow for the award of Fellowship of the University.
*[*Committee Manager's Note – Sir William Lithgow accepted Court's invitation and will receive his Honorary Fellowship at the 5 November Graduation Ceremony.]*

10. Changes to University Ordinances and Regulations

The USCO briefly introduced this paper and outlined that it is a requirement of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2017) that Court members serving on standing committees of Court (with the exception of Audit Committee) are chosen solely for their skills and experience and not by their category of membership. The composition of Court's standing committees had therefore been reviewed to ensure compliance with the Code.

Court **approved** the required amendments to the constitutional regulations in order to comply with the Code.

11. Annual review of key Court documentation 2018/19

Court **approved** the revised versions of key Court documentation:

- a) Court's Statement of Primary Responsibilities
- b) Court Handbook 2018/19
- c) Court Standing Orders 2018/19

12. Report for Scottish Funding Council: internal review of quality

Court **approved** the University's annual report to the SFC on institution-led review and enhancement activities 2017/18.

Items for information

13. Court Members' Survey 2018

Court **noted** the summary feedback from the annual survey of members.

14. Complaints Handling Annual Report 2017/18

Court **noted** the Complaints Handling report for 2017/18.

Committee Reports

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

15. Senate

16. Executive Team

17. Court Business Group

18. Court Membership Group

Court **approved** the following two items:

- Review of Statute 2.5.8 to allow greater flexibility in future lay member appointments and reappointments; and
- Reappointment of Ronnie Cleland for a final three-year term as a lay member of Court from 1 August 2019, following the end of his current term of office as Vice-Convener.

19. Audit & Risk Committee

Court **approved** the appointment of Ernst & Young LLP as External Auditor to be extended by one year to cover the audit of the Financial Statements for 2018/19.

20. Enterprise & Investment Committee

21. Staff Committee

22. AOB

In relation to the Learning and Teaching Building, Court noted that Balfour Beatty were now in possession of the Colville and Architecture buildings and that work had commenced.

Date of next meeting

Court Residential: Thursday 29 & Friday 30 November 2018, Ross Priory