



Draft Court

Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 28 September 2022

Present:

Ms Elizabeth Passey Co-opted Member (Convener of Court), Cllr Susan Aitken (Glasgow City Council Assessor), Dr Craig Daly (Trade Union Nominee), Professor Nicola Dandridge (Co-opted Member), Mr David Finlayson (Co-opted Member), Professor Nick Hill (Elected Academic Staff Member), Stuart Hoggan (General Council Assessor), Professor Simon Kennedy (Elected Academic Staff Member), Mr Laic Khalique (Co-opted Member), Jonathan Loukes (Co-opted Member), Professor Kirsteen McCue (Elected Academic Staff Member), Paula McKerrow (Trade Union Nominee), Mr Ronnie Mercer (Co-opted Member), Dr Christine Middlemiss (General Council Assessor), Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli (Principal), Ms Elspeth Orcharton (Co-opted Member), Lady Rita Rae (Rector), Shan Saba (Co-opted Member), Mr Gavin Stewart (Co-opted Member), Rinna Väre (SRC President), Dr Bethan Wood (Elected Academic Staff Member).

Attending:

Gregor Caldwell (Executive Director of Finance), Professor Frank Coton (Senior Vice Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)), Dr David Duncan (Chief Operating Officer [COO] & University Secretary), Amber Higgins (Executive Officer and Clerk to Court), Professor Martin Hendry (Clerk of Senate).

Apologies:

Mr Christopher Kennedy (Elected Professional Services Representative), Dr June Milligan (Co-opted Member).

CRT/2022/01. Announcements and declaration of Interests

At the start of the meeting, Court took a moment to recognise the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, Queen Elizabeth II. Court noted that her lifetime of service and dedication to the nation and Commonwealth would be long remembered and that she would be greatly missed.

Court wished the University's honorary graduate, His Majesty King Charles III, a long and successful reign. In 2001 the University conferred on him a degree as part of our 550th anniversary, in recognition of his work with young people and for his interest in education and the Arts.

The Convener welcomed Professor Nicola Dandridge (Co-opted Member), Stuart Hoggan (General Council Assessor), Professor Martin Hendry (Clerk of Senate), Dr Christine Middlemiss (General Council Assessor), and Rinna Väre (SRC President), as members, to the meeting.

There was the following declaration of interest in relation to business to be conducted at the meeting: Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli as a Trustee of USS, as an ongoing declaration, given

the updates on the scheme.

A pre-Court briefing took place on embedding new ways of working with a presentation by Christine Barr (Executive Director of P&OD), Ian Campbell (Executive Director of Estates), Professor Michael Brady (Professor of Philosophy) and Peter Mitchell (Assistant Director End User Computing). Court's thanks for the briefing were recorded.

Court was reminded that papers and business were confidential.

CRT/2022/02. Minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday 21 June 2022

The minutes were approved.

CRT/2022/03. Matters Arising

No substantive items were raised.

CRT/2022/04. University Risk Register

Court received a presentation by Mr Gregor Caldwell, Executive Director of Finance, on the updated Risk Register. It was noted that the Risk Register continued to be developed and implemented. The overall student experience was a cause of concern for Court, with discussion on mitigating actions that the University could take such as: an increase in accommodation nominations, capping PGT numbers and planning for additional teaching space in advance of the start of teaching.

Court approved the Risk Register.

CRT/2022/05. Learning and Teaching Strategy

Court noted that the Learning and Teaching Strategy would be postponed to the next meeting.

CRT/2022/06. Report from the Principal

CRT/2022/06.1 Principal's Report

Court received the report from the Principal – Paper 6 and the following areas were noted:

- Student Admissions including International and RUK – Court noted that the final numbers would be reported to the next meeting. It was also noted that there had been issues with timetabling and that the process for setting PGT student course numbers was being reviewed for 2023/24 intake;
- Cost of living increase – Court noted the impact of inflation on both staff and students. Court noted that an increase in funding had been allocated to the student hardship funds and that University buildings would be kept open for as long as possible to provide a warm place for students;
- Accommodation – Court noted the earlier discussion on accommodation issues and that there was a housing crisis affecting all groups of people including students and refugees;
- University Rankings – Court noted that the University had performed well again this year in the Times/Sunday Times University Guide (14th) and the Guardian Rankings (11th).

During the discussion a number of concerns were noted which related to the start of the academic session. It was noted that the student accommodation issues were sector wide and

that the University was taking a number of steps to support students but it was acknowledged that a longer-term solution needed to be found, involving local and national government. The University had managed to maintain its accommodation pledge this year to undergraduates from outwith the Glasgow commuting area who had applied on time. The University was unable to keep its pledge for PGT students. Traditionally only 4% of PGT students seek university accommodation, but that number is increasing and the University will have to adapt its accommodation pledge in 2023-24 to ensure that PGT admissions are closer aligned with accommodation availability for students in the Glasgow area. The main issue with student accommodation reported in the press was with regard to returning students, and the main impact was due to a reduction of available spaces in the private rental sector. The University would continue to press local and national politicians to address the availability of housing. Meantime, the University will deal with individual student cases (involving continuing students or students who had applied too late for accommodation) as a student welfare issue, offering emergency accommodation through hotel and serviced apartment accommodation, and catering support and student hardship funds as appropriate.

On teaching accommodation it was reported that late timetabling changes due to students joining until mid-October had created challenges for academic and support staff, with many last-minute changes. The Senior Managers acknowledged that there had been issues and that going forward PGT student numbers would be set in advance which would enable timetabling to take place at an earlier point in the year and highlight any additional accommodation required prior to the start of the academic session. In addition, the transformation project on teaching accommodation and timetabling will seek to optimize the available space. There was still good teaching space availability later in the teaching day and in the week which can be addressed through more integrated course timetabling.

Court noted that any further discussions about the size and shape of the University should factor in plans for student accommodation both managed by the University but also in the private sector.

During the discussion, Cllr Susan Aitken also reported that accommodation issues were causing issues across the city and that there was a housing crisis taking place which had been as a result of a contraction in the supply of rental properties together with a downturn in homes being built for social housing.

The Convener thanked the Principal for the update.

CRT/2022/07. Report from the University Secretary

Court noted the report from the University Secretary - Paper 7. The following areas were discussed in further detail by Court.

CRT 2022.07.1 Gender Based Violence & Sexual Harassment

Court noted that the report was expected from Morag Ross KC shortly. In the meantime, the University continued to take forward the GBV action plan developed by colleagues in P&OD / EDU.

Court was also informed about a complaint in one of the Schools in relation to sex discrimination. Action was noted as being in hand following the University's HR procedures.

CRT 2022.07.2 Disability Services Review

Court also noted that the matter was currently with the University's insurers and their solicitors and that they were trying to reach a resolution. It was also noted that the recommendations from the recent reviews continued to be implemented and good progress was being made.

CRT 2022.07.3 Industrial Tribunal

It was reported that the University was recently involved in an employment tribunal brought by a member of academic staff and that the outcome was anticipated by the end of October.

CRT 2022.07.4 Court Strategy Day 2022

The Court Strategy day was noted, and it was recorded that it had provided an opportunity for Court to be updated on, and to discuss, several areas including planning for the start of the academic session. Areas covered included:

- A Vision of the Future: where the University might be in 2036 and 2051
- From where the University had come: the University's history longer term history, coupled with a focus on trends and performance since the 1990s
- Geopolitics: the national and international context and the implications for HE and emerging markets
- Impact: an update on UofG and the SDG goals

Key speakers included representatives from the Bank of England and UK International Universities. Professor Jane Duckett from the College of Social Sciences also gave a presentation.

It was noted that a feedback form would be sent out to Court members for their response.

CRT 2022.07.5 New and continuing Court Members

Court noted that Rinna Väre had begun her term on Court from 1 July 2022 *ex officio* as the SRC President, for one year. Court also noted that Stuart Hoggan and Christine Middlemiss both began their terms on Court on 1 July 2022 as General Council Assessors for four years.

It was noted that Kerry Christie had been re-appointed as an External Lay member of the Remuneration Committee for a further 4 years from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2026.

It was reported to Court that the Nominations Committee had approved the appointments of David Thompson and Arleen McGichen to the Finance Committee as an External Lay member for four years from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2026.

It was also reported to Court that the Nominations Committee had approved the appointment of Martin Sinclair to the Audit and Risk Committee as an External Lay member for four years from 1 October 2022 to 31 September 2026.

Court also noted that there was a vacancy on Court for an Elected Academic Member, and it was hoped that this would be filled by mid-October. It was also noted that the process and procedures for future appointments would be reviewed.

CRT 2022.07.6 Court Business 2022/23

Court received the Schedule of Court Business for the coming year, together with the Statement of Primary Responsibilities of Court and a list of remits/memberships of Court Committees for the session. It was agreed that the Annual Schedule would be amended to highlight pre-court briefings and to include a discussion on PO&D, succession planning and PR & Comms.

The attendance lists for meetings of Court and its Committees for 2021/22 had been reviewed; there were no issues for action in connection with this.

The University Secretary reported that a Governance Effectiveness Review would take place in 2023 and that further details would be reported to the next Court meeting.

CRT 2022.07.7 Student Contract

The student contract, to which all students sign up at registration, had been updated for academic session 2022-23. Court noted that the University Secretary had approved the Student Contract during the summer period. Feedback was received that the contract was felt to be long and complicated. Court agreed that regrettably that was the nature of contracts, but that it would be beneficial to develop an infographic as supplementary information on the contract.

CRT 2022.07.8 Convener's Business

Court noted that the Convener had attended the General Council Half-Yearly meeting as part of stakeholder engagement. The role of General Council was discussed, and it was agreed that an annual update on the General Council would be forwarded to Court.

CRT 2022.07.9 Pay and Pensions – industrial action

Court noted that Unison had recently taken strike action and was planning more stoppage days. The Principal had written to all members of staff indicating that the University had budgeted an extra 3% for pay this year and that discussions were ongoing with local trade unions on how this could be disbursed. The University is keen that this is done expeditiously to ensure that pressures on cost of living are alleviated.

CRT 2022.07.10 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

Court noted the University was taking the lead on the revision of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance, on behalf of the Scottish HE sector, as a legacy of the Convener's term as Chair of the Committee of Scottish University Chairs, and the University Secretary's related role as Secretary to the Committee of Scottish University Chairs. It was hoped that this work would be concluded by the end of the calendar year.

CRT 2022.07.11 Student Accommodation Issues

As discussed previously, Court noted that as in other cities across the UK, the contraction in the private rental Sector had affected the ability of students to find residential accommodation at the start of the academic year. The University had advised students not to travel to Glasgow unless they had pre-arranged accommodation. The University had also made temporary hotel rooms available to students on an emergency basis. Court noted that the University was addressing the issue in a number of ways and that the short and medium planning for student accommodation was being discussed as a matter of urgency.

CRT 2022.07.12 Head of School Appointments

Court noted the following changes, and congratulated the individuals on their new roles:

College of MVLS

Head of the School of Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health

Professor Christian Delles had been appointed as Head of the School of Cardiovascular & Metabolic Health from 1 August 2022 for a period of four years.

Head of the School of Cancer Sciences

Professor Chris Halsey had been appointed as Head of the School of Cancer Sciences from 1 September 2022 for a period of four years.

Head of the School of Psychology & Neuroscience

Professor Kate Jeffery had been appointed as Head of the School of Psychology & Neuroscience from 1 September 2022 for a period of four years.

College of Science and Engineering

Head of the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC)

Professor Finlay Stuart had been re-appointed as Head of the SUERC from 1 August for a period of two years.

CRT 2022.07.13 Board of Directors – Research Data Scotland

Court noted the appointment of Jill Pell as the University of Glasgow representative on the RDS Board of Directors.

CRT 2022.07.14 Chancellors Fund

Court noted the annual update on the Chancellor's Fund.

CRT/2022/08. Student Matters, including: SEC Report; SRC President update

CRT 2022.08.1 Rector update

The Rector reported that she continued to work with the SRC representatives and that discussions around issues with accommodation and space were continuing.

CRT 2022.08.2 SRC update

The SRC President reported that the start of the academic session had been very busy and that the SRC advice centre had dealt with around 300 student accommodation issues. It was noted that a cost-of-living support guide would be launched soon. It was noted that approximately 10,000 students had attended the Welcome Fair and the SRC was looking at more ways to support clubs and societies as space was an issue on campus. The SRC President reported the SRC sabbatical officers would focus on a number of areas in 2022/23 including: cost-of-living support; student carers policy; and the international PGT student experience.

CRT 2022.08.3 SRC Student Experience Committee and Strategy

It was noted that a cost-of-living action group had been established to look at ways to support students. It was also reported that an Anti-Racism Campaign would be launched shortly.

The University Secretary provided an update on the Student Experience Strategy and Court noted it would come back to a later meeting for formal approval.

The Convener thanked the Rector, SRC President and the University Secretary for their reports.

CRT/2022/09. Reports of Court Committees

CRT/2022/09.1. Finance Committee

Gavin Stewart, chair of the Committee, outlined the report, from the Committee. Members had received an update on the current economic outlook which remained uncertain with political change, geopolitical events and climate change further compounding pressures in national and global economies.

Court noted that the Committee had reviewed the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Court approved the amended ToR for the Finance Committee.

During the discussion it was noted that Committee had approved a nominations agreement

which was now recommended to Court for approval. It is hoped that this would help to address some of the issues around student accommodation alongside discussions with the City Council on the development of student accommodation. The Court noted that the overall lack of student accommodation was a risk to the growth and reputation of the University, as well as affecting student experience and wellbeing. It was reported that a lack of teaching accommodation on campus was also causing issues with a number of external venues being hired to supplement space.

Court approved the nominations investment agreement as outlined in the papers.

The report was noted.

CRT/2022/09.2 Estates Committee

Ronnie Mercer, chair of the Committee, outlined the report from the Committee which updated on the progress of the Strategic Property partnerships, the current stage of the tenders for the reactive and planned maintenance contract and the current pressures on teaching space.

The report was noted.

CRT/2022/09.3 Audit & Risk Committee

Elsbeth Orcharton, chair of the Committee, reported that at an extraordinary meeting on 18 August the Committee met with the PwC, the External Auditors and received a presentation on the external audit approach for the year ending 31 July 2022 which would be carried out in accordance with the requirements of auditing standards and other professional requirements. It was also reported that the Committee had received a briefing on the updated Risk Register. It was agreed that the updated Register would be included in Court papers for September 2022 for approval. The Committee also received internal audit reports on: Performance and Development, IT Project Management and Change and External regulatory environment: Export Controls.

Court noted that the Committee had reviewed the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Court approved the amended terms of reference for the Audit and Risk Committee.

The report was noted.

CRT/2022/09.4 IPSC

Frank Coton, chair of the Committee reported that IPSC had covered a number of topics. IPSC members had also approved the terms of reference for the coming year with no changes.

The report was noted.

CRT/2022/09.5 People and Organisational Development Committee

Court noted that the Committee report was from the June 2022 meeting and included the following items: a strategic update on Pay, Performance & Reward from the Director of Pay & Reward. The Executive Director of P&OD had also given an update on strategic activity including the latest position on the USS pension and industrial action, colleague engagement, and diversity and inclusion. The VP HoC and Head of P&OD provided an overview of strategic activity within the College of Social Sciences, and the Head of Equality and Diversity Unit attended to provide an overview of the progress on the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion PSED Equality Outcomes – One Year On.

The report was noted.

CRT/2022/10. Any Other Business

The Convener reported that none had been raised.

CRT/2022/11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Court would be held on Wednesday 23 November 2022 at 2pm at the Crichton Campus, Dumfries. A Pre-Court briefing would take place at 12pm.

The Convener, on behalf of Court, wished the University the very best for the current Academic Year.