



## Court

### Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 10 February 2021 via Zoom

#### Present:

Ms Elizabeth Passey Co-opted Member (Convener of Court), Mr Graeme Bissett (Co-opted Member), Mr Liam Brady (SRC President), Dr Chris Cassells (Trade Union Nominee) Ms Heather Cousins (Co-opted Member), Dr Craig Daly (Trade Union Nominee), Mr David Finlayson (Co-opted Member), Professor Carl Goodyear (Elected Academic Staff Member), Ms Julia Hegele (SRC Assessor) Professor Nick Hill (Elected Academic Staff Member), Mr Christopher Kennedy (Elected Professional Services Representative), Dr Simon Kennedy (Elected Academic Staff Member), Professor Kirsteen McCue (Elected Academic Staff Member), Dr Morag Macdonald Simpson (General Council Assessor), Mr Ronnie Mercer (Co-opted Member), Dr June Milligan (Co-opted Member), Mr David Milloy (Co-opted Member), Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli (Principal), Ms Elspeth Orcharton (Co-opted Member), Ms Lesley Sutherland (General Council Assessor), Dr Bethan Wood (Elected Academic Staff Member)

#### Attending:

Gregor Caldwell (Executive Director of Finance), Professor Frank Coton (Vice Principal Academic Planning and Technological Innovation), Dr David Duncan (Chief Operating Officer [COO] & University Secretary), Amber Higgins (Executive Officer and Clerk to Court), Professor Neal Juster (Senior Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Jill Morrison (Vice-Principal & Clerk of Senate), Professor Iain McInnes (Vice Principal & Head of College MVLS), Uzma Khan (Deputy Secretary and Director of Planning), Susan Ashworth (Executive Director of Information Services) for Item only, Ian Campbell (Executive Director of Estates), Mark Johnston (Director of IT Services) for Item only.

#### Apologies:

Cllr Susan Aitken (Glasgow City Council Assessor), Mr Gavin Stewart (Co-opted Member),

#### CRT/2020/26. Announcements

The Convener of Court reported that Ken Sutherland Co-opted Lay member had stood down with immediate effect at the start of Jan 2021. Court thanked Ken for his hard work and dedication during his time as a member of ISPC and Court over the last three years.

The Convener welcomed Professor Iain McInnes (Vice Principal & Head of College MVLS), Uzma Khan (Deputy Secretary and Director of Planning), Susan Ashworth (Executive Director of Information Services), Ian Campbell (Executive Director of Estates), Mark Johnston (Director of IT Services) 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.

It was recorded that Professor Neal Juster (Senior Vice Principal), Professor Frank Coton (Vice Principal Academic Planning and Technological Innovation) Rachel Sandison, (Vice Principal External Relations), Professor Sara Carter (Vice Principal and Head of College Social Sciences), Gregor Caldwell Executive (Director of Finance) and Ian Campbell (Executive Director of Estates) had briefed Court at the pre-lunch session on the business case for the ASBS/PGT Hub Building. Court's thanks for the briefing were recorded.

Court was reminded that papers and business were confidential.

### **CRT/2020/27. Minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 25 November 2020**

The minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 25 November were approved.

### **CRT/2020/28. Matters Arising**

Court noted that under previous item *CRT/2020/17. University Strategy 2020-2025* it was agreed that the confirmed KPI's would be tabled at the February Court meeting, however these would now be available for the April Court meeting.

### **CRT/2020/29. Covid-19 Update and Planning**

Court received an update from the Principal, Dr David Duncan and Mr Gregor Caldwell on the current planning and progress made following the reopening of the campus. Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- The Scottish Government had announced new lockdown measures in response to the rising number of new variant Covid-19 cases. A small amount of teaching was still taking place and the library remained open with restricted numbers;
- It was reported that due to the limitations on dental education and training, discussions were taking place with the Scottish Government and the General Dental Council about the next steps for all dental students. An announcement was due soon with regards to dental students being required to continue their studies for a further year which would have a knock-on effect on admissions to Dental courses for 2021-22;
- The use of online examinations continued to cause concerns in some subject areas, especially those that required the use of formulae etc. It was noted that Professor Frank Coton was looking the possible steps that could be taken to prevent or detect collusion or cheating in examinations; the view was expressed that it was important for some subject areas to return to in-person exams in examination rooms as soon as government pandemic regulations permitted;
- Student support and hardship also continued to be a key focus and Careers were helping students with jobshops. Student progression was also being monitored closely by Colleges;
- Although there had been disruption to research, those involved in research have received regular communications from the Vice Principal - Research, on the continuation of essential research and the University's support for researchers during and after the pandemic;

- Health and Safety was the central consideration to all decisions made, with regular meetings of key staff taking place. Line managers had been asked to pursue individual discussions in light of the additional caring responsibilities facing some staff;
- Student numbers continued to look positive. Risks remained outstanding in relation to income from residences, sport and catering. It was noted that budget was now being released back to colleges.

Court thanked staff and students for their continued efforts and recognised all the hard work that had been undertaken during the pandemic to keep the University running especially during the recent lockdown measures.

### **CRT/2020/30. Capital Plan – Adam Smith Business School/PGT Building**

Following the presentation at the Court briefing, Executive Director of Finance, Gregor Caldwell, outlined the key areas for Court to consider in relation to the ASBS/PGT Hub business case – affordability, student demand, fully developed IT strategy and an estates plan.

Court noted that the Estates and Finance Committees had been provided with extensive information in support of a decision on whether to proceed with the ASBS – PGT building in the context of the financial prospects for the University. The business case for the building had been approved by Court in late 2019 but construction was paused in the summer of last year in the light of the pandemic. The Committees had met in January 2021 to assess the decisions required, including presentations at a joint workshop.

During the discussion it was noted that the building cost had been re-examined and confirmed at a slightly lower level than in the original business case, but remained at just over £80m, which was a material commitment in the context of the University's future cash flows. The decision to approve the business case looked closely at the effects of the pandemic on demand for ASBS places and PGT places in other schools, together with considerations of capacity given evolving teaching methodologies.

Since the last business case was approved, the opportunity had been taken to address strategic plans and spend requirements in important areas including estate maintenance and major building refurbishment and in developing the University's ICT strategy. It was noted that the outlined plans for the fulfilment of the Glasgow Green strategy had also been incorporated. The business case had also been updated to include a full financial framework, which enabled the decision on the ASBS – PGT building to be taken in the context of the overall University financial position and prospects over the next 15 years.

During the discussion it was noted that an assessment of the existing estate of the campus was being undertaken which would help to enable planning of future spend and ensure that all areas of the campus provided suitable learning environments.

Court considered the papers in relation to the Adam Smith Business School/PGT Hub which provided a comprehensive overview of the University's financial prospects and the principal changes to the ASBS/PGT business case since the approval of the original in late 2019. Court noted that both Chairs of the Estates and Finance Committees recommend to Court that the ASBS-PGT building should proceed, with anticipated opening ahead of the 2023-24 academic year.

Court approved the business case for the ASBS/PGT Hub with an approximate cost of £80m.

Court thanked all those involved with the preparation of the case.

### **CRT/2020/31. IT Strategy update/ Information Services Strategic Plan**

Court received a presentation by Professor Frank Coton, (Vice Principal Academic Planning and Technological Innovation), Susan Ashworth (Executive Director of Information Services) and Mark Johnston (Director of IT Services) on the Information Services Strategic Plan.

The presentation provided an update on progress in relation to the University Technology Strategy and highlighted the next phase in the evolution of the strategy. Court was also provided with a narrative from the Director of IT Services on the Covid Response. This helped to familiarise Court members with the scale and extent of the Covid response and provided visibility to Court of the work going on "under the hood".

Court noted that the initial emphasis of the Technology Strategy was to build foundations for the future and address the technical infrastructure debt. The strategy was also to initiate the Enterprise Integration activity, and in the next twelve months, the Technology Strategy would be refined and updated to include more detailed plans for the "Evolving our Approach" phase, specifically: developing our future systems and applications roadmap and addressing deficiencies in the data architecture.

Court noted that a revised Capital Plan had been developed in May 2020 to reflect financial planning in light of the COVID19 pandemic which identified "must do" and "could do" projects for future consideration. This would enable a more sustainable funding model but it was noted that it would take around 7 years to address the backlog of projects.

During discussion it was noted that to address long-term technical debt and system/data siloes a number of programmes of work had been mapped out:

- Infrastructure as a Service Programme
- Network Infrastructure Investment Programme/Unified Communications
- Enterprise Integration

It was hoped that the programmes of work would lead to a digital environment that would benefit all in the following ways:-

- **Students** - A seamless and personalised experience, anytime, anyplace and on any device, integrated with preferred ways of living and working and supporting wellbeing.
- **Staff** - The flexibility to work effectively wherever and whenever you want; keeping them connected, supporting collaboration, enabled by effective and intuitive business systems and processes and maximising teaching and research opportunities, enabling a fulfilling work-life balance.
- **External Stakeholders** - Accessible and secure communication and collaboration channels, strengthening connections with the University and creating new opportunities for future cooperation and engagement.

Court thanked Professor Coton, Susan Ashworth, Mark Johnston and all IT staff for all their hard work on the Strategy and support staff and students over the last year. Court also acknowledged Ken Sutherland's contribution to IPSC and the development of the strategic plan.

## **CRT/2020/32. Report from the Principal**

### *CRT/2020/32.1 Admissions*

Court noted some headline admissions figures for 2021/22. During discussion the following were noted for Undergraduate admission:

- MD20 applications increased by 9% and MD40 increased by 21.1%
- Total Home applications had increased by 20%
- RUK applications had increased by 39%
- EU applications had decreased by 47% and it was unclear what the conversion rate would be given the move from 'Home' 'no fee status' to 'fee-paying status'
- International applications from outwith the EU had increased 22%;
- It was noted that PGT applications were currently slightly down on last year, but still significantly up on 2019-20.

### *CRT/2020/32.2 Scottish Government Budget*

Court noted that on 28 January, the Scottish Government had presented its Budget for 2021/22. Within the Education and Skills Portfolio, the Scottish Funding Council had been allocated £1.9bn in 21/22, up from £1.88bn in 20/21. For Higher Education, combined financing for Resource and Capital had risen 2.7% or by £29.5m. There were also indications that additional allocations might be made to this budget in due course.

It was confirmed that Ministers were committed to meeting the costs of any additional places in 2021/22 stemming from the decision to award Highers based upon teacher judgment of learner attainment. Court also noted that within the Budget an additional £17.3m had been allocated to SAAS for 'student support and tuition fee payments' and there was an additional £6.7m for international higher education, which would, in part, be used to expand the Saltire Scholarship Programme.

### *CRT/2020/32.3 Higher education developments*

During discussion the following were noted:

- EU/Brexit update – the EU and UK reached agreement on the terms of their future cooperation. Under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK would associate to Horizon Europe, providing researchers with full access to participate, lead and receive funding from Horizon Europe programmes. However, the UK would no longer participate in Erasmus+. The UK Government's had announced a replacement to be called the Turing Scheme. Although this was welcomed, there remained a very real risk that the breadth of Erasmus would not be replicated;
- Policy update – UK Government's response to the Pearce Review into the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) confirmed that subject-level assessments would not continue and that the OfS would be asked to develop a revised provider-level TEF. Teaching grant resource would be reprofiled towards high-cost STEM subjects, cutting funding for subject areas such as the humanities. An interim position on the Augar review would be published in due course.

### **CRT/2020/33. Report from the University Secretary**

Court noted the report from the University Secretary - Paper 8. The following areas were discussed in further detail by Court.

#### *CRT 2020.33.1 Disability Complaint*

The University Secretary provided an update to Court in response to Court members being contacted directly by a relative of a student who had completed their studies at the University of Glasgow.

Court noted that the case was still going through the University procedures, with two academic appeals outstanding; these were being considered by the relevant School and the Senate Office respectively. Court also noted that the University would undertake a lessons learned exercise once the appeals were completed. In addition, it had been agreed that an informal meeting would take place, with key staff, to allow a sub-group of Lay Court members a chance to understand the case better and identify any further action required by Court.

The University Secretary also reported that an internal audit of Disability Services and an internal review of this area led by the Clerk of Senate were underway; after these had been completed the University would follow through on any actions identified.

Court agreed that the action outlined above was appropriate.

#### *CRT 2020.33.2 SFC – Interim Outcome Agreement*

Court noted that the Scottish Funding Council had requested that the University return a one-off Outcome Agreement to reflect upon 20/21 so far and the plans for the rest of the year.

Court approved the Interim Outcome Agreement.

#### *CRT 2020.33.3 Court Sub Committees*

Court approved the change of name to a Court subcommittee from Human Resources Committee to People & Organisational Development Committee.

#### *CRT 2020.33.4 Directors of Research Institutes and Heads of School Appointments*

Court noted the following change:

##### *Institute of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation*

Professor Gerry Graham had been appointed as Acting Director of the Institute of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation from mid-November 2020 to July 2021 pending the recruitment of a new Director.

#### *CRT 2020.33.5 SRC Sabbatical Officers*

Court approved the change of title of one of the SRC Council Members from Charities, Clubs & Societies Officer to Charities Officer.

#### *CRT 2020.33.6 Rectorial Election*

Court noted that the Rectorial Election was currently being planned for April/May 2021 following the SRC and student society elections in March 2021.

#### *CRT 2020.33.7 Organisational Change*

Court was informed that there were 3 areas currently being discussed Facilities Services, Hunterian Front of house staff and a catering proposal and that Court would receive a formal

report at its next meeting.

*CRT 2020.33.8 Clyde Water Front/Living Lab*

Court was informed that a number of proposals would be coming forward to the Estates and Finance Committees in the future in relation to the living lab project.

**CRT/2020/34. Student Matters, including: SEC Report; SRC President update**

The SRC President noted that Court had received reports from the November 2020 and January 2021 meetings. Key points raised included the introduction of Assessment Support Measures, the possibility of the extension of the Alumni discount for PGT courses and the rectorial election due to take place mid April.

Julia Hegele, SRC Assessor also noted that mental health continued to be a concern amongst students. The lack of socialising and fractured return was causing concern for a large number of students which was having a negative impact on the drive and engagement of students. It was noted that there was a large amount of support available for students and that positive communications from the University helped to boost the mood of students.

David Duncan, University Secretary, noted that the University continued to focus on support and wellbeing for both staff and students. The Principal noted that it was a tough time for students and the University was trying to maximise the support available to them. Court noted that students were highly appreciative of the work being done by staff which also included a large amount of pastoral work at evenings and weekends.

The Convener thanked SRC President and SRC Assessor for their report.

**CRT/2020/35. Reports of Court Committees**

*CRT/2020/35.1 Finance Committee*

Graeme Bissett, chair of the Committee, reported that the University continued to respond strongly to the Covid-19 crisis. It was noted that the Committee supported the business case of the ASBS/PGT Hub that had been discussed under item *CRT/2020/30. Capital Plan – ASBS/PGT Building*.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2020/35.2 Estates Committee*

Ronnie Mercer, chair of the Committee, reported that the Committee had approved 3 Capex projects as outlined in Paper 11.2.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2020/35.3 IPSC*

Frank Coton, Vice Principal reported that Dr Ken Sutherland, Vice Chair of IPSC, had stepped down from the University Court and IPSC. IPSC expressed their gratitude to Ken for his strong support and wished him well for the future.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2020/35.4 Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee*

Court noted the report and a query was raised about the planned introduction of the Stress in the Workplace Policy. David Duncan, University Secretary agreed to look into the introduction of the policy.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2020/35.5 Nominations Committee*

Elizabeth Passey, chair of the Committee reported that the meeting had originally been called as two members were due to demit office in Dec 2021 – Graeme Bissett and David Milloy, and it had been agreed that the committee would review the current recruitment process to ensure greater diversity in the candidates coming forward. It was reported that Ken Sutherland had recently resigned with immediate effect and this had led to 3 openings for new Co-opted members of Court. The need for expertise in the broad areas covered by Graeme, David and Ken was noted.

Court noted that the Nominations Committee agreed that a more strategic approach would be taken and information about committee membership should also be looked at to see if any members would be suitable as Co-opted members of Court. JM raised concerns about the lack of racial diversity in the University's governance structures, particularly in light of the recent Understanding Racism, Transforming University Cultures report and action plan. The Principal commented that this would be addressed at the next meeting of Nominations Committee which was currently looking at several ways to improve the diversity of Court members.

The report was noted.

**CRT/2020/36. Senate Matters**

The Clerk of Senate outlined the communication from Senate and highlighted the key areas as the Library Annual report, a presentation by Rachel Sandison, Vice Principal (External Relations) on the planned activities for COP26, and Honorary Degree nominations.

The Clerk of Senate also reported that Learning and Teaching Strategy 2021-2025 had been approved by Senate. Professor Fischbacher-Smith informed Senate that the Strategy would promote the following values: Inclusive policies and practices that promote student and staff wellbeing; Integrity and respect in our behaviours, academic standards and quality. Collaboration across staff and student communities, recognising diversity of contribution and valuing collective endeavour; Promoting continuing professional and skills development to support evolution in learning and teaching; Harnessing curiosity, creativity and enterprise in our research-rich environment; Promoting excellence through evidence approaches and recognising efforts and achievements; Evaluating our programmes, teaching practices and our associated investments in technology in terms of their connection with, and impact on, sustainability and climate change.

The Clerk of Senate advised Court that as outlined earlier a package of Assessment Support Measures was being prepared for undergraduate and PGT students in recognition of the numerous challenges arising from the pandemic that many were facing in order to provide mitigation as far as possible while maintaining academic standards. This had been developed in consultation with key parties, including the SRC, the University's Senior Management Group, and the College Deans of Learning and Teaching. The first tranche of detailed information on



these measures was due to be issued to students and staff in the week beginning 8 February 2021.

Court thanked the Clerk of Senate for the update.

### **CRT/2020/37. Any Other Business**

#### *CRT/2020/37.1 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance - IHRA*

Craig Daly, Trade Union Nominee, raised a concern about the University's decision to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and the impact that this could have on academic free speech. Mr Daly was concerned that this had been rushed through Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee without regard for the wider implications or reputational impact.

As Chair of EDSC, the Principal reported that the policy had been fully discussed at the Committee which had both staff and student representatives (including a trade union representative) and The Committee had agreed with the definition of antisemitism, after considering all representations. The Committee had not endorsed the examples of antisemitism offered by the IHRA as illustrations. It was noted that the Scottish Government had also adopted the IHRA definition, as well as almost all MPs in Westminster, and many charitable bodies around Scotland and the UK.

It was noted that although this was not on the Human Resources Committee agenda, which was due to take place on 11 February, it would be highlighted under AOB.

#### *CRT/2020/37.2 Note of thanks*

The Convener thanked all members of the University community for their continued contributions, flexibility and commitment during the last 11 months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **CRT/2020/38. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Court will be held on Wednesday 14 April 2021 at 2pm via Zoom.

A Pre-Court briefing will take place at 12pm via Zoom on the Heritage of the University - Buildings, Archives and Culture.