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**Court**

**Minute of Meeting held on Wednesday 17 April 2024 held in the Seminar Room, Mary Stewart Building, Garscube and via Zoom**

**Present:**

Ms Elizabeth Passey Co-opted Member (Convener of Court), Cllr Susan Aitken (Glasgow City Council Assessor), Professor Sarah Armstrong (Elected Academic Staff Member), Professor Tara Brendle (Elected Academic Staff Member), Kerry Christie (Co-opted Member), Professor Nicola Dandridge (Co-opted Member), Mr David Finlayson (Co-opted Member), Stuart Hoggan (General Council Assessor - Zoom), Dr Bo Hu (Chancellor’s Assessor), Mr Christopher Kennedy (Elected Professional Services Representative), Professor Simon Kennedy (Elected Academic Staff Member), Mr Laic Khalique (Co-opted Member), Jonathan Loukes (Co-opted Member - Zoom), Paula McKerrow (Trade Union Nominee), Pablo Moran-Ruiz (SRC Assessor), Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli (Principal), Ms Elspeth Orcharton (Co-opted Member), Professor Richard Reeve (Trade Union Nominee), Shan Saba (Co-opted Member, Mr Gavin Stewart (Co-opted Member),Hailie Pentleton-Owens (SRC President), Professor Bethan Wood (Elected Academic Staff Member).

**Attending:**

Gregor Caldow (Executive Director of Finance), Professor Frank Coton (Senior Vice Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)), Dr David Duncan (Chief Operating Officer [COO] & University Secretary), Professor Martin Hendry (Clerk of Senate), Amber Higgins (Executive Officer and Clerk to Court), Professor Chris Pearce (Vice Principal Research and Knowledge Exchange) for Item *CRT/2023/40* only, Jonathan Jones (Change Director, International Student Experience) for Item *CRT/2023/41* only and Rachel Sandison (Deputy Vice Chancellor (External Relations) and Vice Principal) for Item *CRT/2023/42* only.

**Apologies:**

Dr Ghassan Abu-Sittah (Rector), Dr Christine Middlemiss (General Council Assessor).

**CRT/2023/37. Announcements and declaration of Interests**

In his absence, the Convener congratulated Dr Ghassan Abu-Sittah as the new Rector and a new member of Court.

There was the following declaration of interest in relation to business to be conducted at the meeting: Dr David Duncan as a member of the UCEA - National Negotiating Team.

Court noted that two tours had taken place prior to the Court meeting - Hunterian Art Gallery and Adam Smith Business School & Postgraduate Hub. Court thanked Steph Scholten (Director of the Hunterian), Dr Lola Sánchez-Jáuregui (Art Curator) and Craig Ewing (Assistant Director – Facilities Services (Hard FM)).

A pre-Court briefing took place on the work of the Transformation Team. Nadia Ness (Executive Director of Transformation) provided an update on the recent work of the University’s Transformation Team with a timeline of the team’s activities since the approval of the University’s Transformation Strategy in 2018. Court’s thanks for the briefing were recorded.

Court also noted the display by Archives in relation to the 200th anniversary of the birth of William Thomson, Lord Kelvin. Archives & Special Collections holds a rich collection of material on Lord Kelvin’s life and work, and the display previewed a small sample that would be used to support the University’s commemorations. It also highlighted the University’s long-standing record of academic excellence, global collaboration and commercial success. Court thanked Michael Gallagher (Archivist - University Heritage Collections Engagement) and Elizbieta Gorska-Wiklo (Preservation Manager).

Court was reminded that papers and business were confidential.

**CRT/2023/38. Minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 14 February 2024**

The minutes were approved.

**CRT/2023/39. Matters Arising**

No substantive items were raised.

**CRT/2023/40.** **Annual Research Update**

Court received a presentation by Professor Chris Pearce, (Vice-Principal for Research & Knowledge Exchange) on the University’s 2020-2025 Research Strategy. The paper provided a brief update on research performance, and some of the major and current issues in the sector related to research.

Court noted that for calendar year 2023, total research awards were £208M compared to £230M in 2022. Looking ahead, the opportunities to attract large, collaborative research projects addressing major challenges continued into 2024, e.g. food security, health, climate, infectious diseases, etc. The University’s Strategic Research Initiatives unit had been working closely with research support teams in the Colleges to manage these opportunities and a significant portfolio of large grants had been submitted in the first quarter of 2024. However, every major university in the UK had recognised these opportunities and competition for funding across the sector continued to intensify.

Professor Pearce updated Court on progress with Glasgow Changing Futures (GCF) which was perhaps the most significant response by the University to the changing landscape. GCF represented an institutional commitment and programme of activity to contribute solutions to major societal challenges, and a proactive approach to the University’s contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Professor Pearce also provided an update on Horizon Europe which was a complex area and required specialist knowledge. The University was supporting staff to maximise opportunities and reengage with existing collaborative networks. It was also noted that a review of Internation Research Support would be undertaken in the coming months.

During the discussion it was noted that the University was working closely with the City and Strathclyde University, which was particularly important when calls were made for collaborative or regional funding calls.

A query was raised about the lack of information available for Early Career Development Programme (ECDP) mentors and the challenges associated with navigating different systems and pathways. Professor Pearce informed Court that the University was in the process of reviewing the existing guidance for ECDP participants and mentors. The University was also exploring how to better integrate the Organisational Development unit and Research and Innovation Services to simplify the processes, systems and guidance associated with the ECDP.

A query was also raised about the MRC funding for Social and Public Health Sciences Unit (SPHSU). Court noted that discussions were in the early stages and that the College and University were working closely together to look at all the options available.

Court thanked Professor Pearce for his update.

**CRT/2023/41. Student Experience Strategy and Action Plan**

Court received an update on the Student Experience Strategy and Action Plan by the University Secretary and Jonathan Jones (Change Director, International Student Experience). The Strategy would provide students with a fulfilling, rewarding and enriching co-curricular experience that would shape how they saw their place in the world and help them to become world-changers. To achieve this, the University’s ‘Digital Transformation’ would ensure the optimal student user experience across all digital services, products and channels, while the University’s ‘Campus Development Programme’ would focus on refurbishing and expanding student accommodation, and the sport, social, recreational and support facilities across all of the University’s campuses.

Court noted that the during 2023, eight project business cases had been developed and approved, two for each of the four pillars. All approved projects had commenced delivery and were in various states of implementation. A total of £2.5m of funding had been allocated, funding pilots for each approved project up to July 2025 or July 2026. £1m of funding remained with six projects coming forward for approval in the first half of 2024. Five of the originally suggested projects were currently on hold for a variety of reasons.

A query was raised about the funding of some of the projects and if this should come from core funding and it was noted that this would be looked at. It was also noted that work was still ongoing in relation to support for students with a disability and further work was required to ensure that the University continued to make progress in this area.

Court thanked the University Secretary and Mr Jones for the update.

**CRT/2023/42. Report from the Principal**

*CRT/2023/42.1* *Admissions – UCAS Applications and PGT Update*

Rachel Sandison (Deputy Vice Chancellor (External Relations) and Vice Principal) and Gregor Caldow (Executive Director of Finance) provided an update on the recruitment outlook for 2024/45 for PGT international students. It was noted that two budget scenarios continued to be developed and would come to the June meeting for discussion and approval.

During the discussion it was noted that there continued to be uncertainty in the conversion rate and that a small movement in conversion rates would have a significant impact on budgets. It was reported that at present it was expected that the forecast numbers would be above Scenario 2 and that a further update would be reported to the June meeting, but it was noted that it would be September before there was high level of certainty around the PGT student numbers.

A query was raised about the impact of student conduct cases on the international student experience and the level of support that is provided for incoming PGT students. The Clerk of Senate reported that a number of steps had been taken to ensure that students were aware of the University Regulations and the steps that needed to be followed should they be accused of breaching the regulations but acknowledged more could be done such as looking at the design of assessments and guidance on the use of AI.

Court welcomed the update and noted the high level of uncertainty around the recruitment position along with the variety of factors that was impacting student applications and conversion rates.

*CRT/2023/42.2 Principal’s Report*

Court also received the report from the Principal – Paper 6. The following areas were noted:

* Scottish Government Budget 2024-25 – Court noted the Scottish Government had present the draft budget on 19 December. It was unclear at this stage how £28.5m reduction in resource funding would be implemented.
* Skilled Worker Visa Route – Court noted that the Home Office had published the associated Statement of Changes to the immigration rules and confirmed the Skilled Worker visa rules would take effect from 4 April 2024. The changes would impact the ability to recruit certain staff and it was noted that P&OD were working through the impact on staff who were currently sponsored by the University.
* UK Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) – Court noted that a rapid review of Graduate Visa Route was being undertaken and was due to report on 14 May 2024.
* University rankings - THE World Reputation Rankings had recently been published. The University’s position had dropped seven places to 114th globally in this league table. The 2024 QS World University Rankings by Subject had also been published. These rankings detailed performance across five broad areas, and in individual subjects. With 23 out of 43 subject areas ranking in the top 100 in the world, the results again demonstrated the global reputation of the University across a broad range of subject areas.
* SMG Appointments – Court noted that Professor Frank Coton, Rachel Sandison and Dr David Duncan had been reappointed as Deputy Vice Chancellors. These reappointments had been confirmed for a further four-year term, to 30 September 2029.

The Convener thanked the Principal for the update.

**CRT/2023/43. Report from the University Secretary**

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

*CRT/2023/43.1 Court Effectiveness Review – Autumn 2023*

Court noted the Court Effectiveness Review Action Plan and proposed deadlines. Following discussion it was agreed that the Working Group would take forward the implementation of the recommendations and the deadlines would be extended as required.

*CRT/2023/43.2 Standing Orders*

Court noted the as part of the Court Effectiveness Review, the Court Office had worked with the legal team to review the Standing Orders and ensure they complied fully with 2016 HE Governance Act. Following the review, it was noted that the existing arrangements for the removal of Court members did not meet the conditions set out in the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. A draft had been prepared and circulated to the Court officers for consideration and endorsement before being submitted to Court for formal approval.

A query was raised in relation to the quorum for Court decisions to be ratified. It was agreed that this should be reviewed. It was agreed that this would be looked at and a proposal brought back to the next meeting for discussion and formal approval.

It was noted that amendments had also been suggested to the Code of Conduct for Court Members which related to the addition of the phrase ‘*not act in a way which might reasonably harm the reputation of the University’*. Concerns were raised by Professor Richard Reeve, Professor Sarah Armstrong and Paula McKerrow as it was felt that this could limit academic freedom or freedom of speech and could lead to Court members being penalised for raising a legitimate challenge to a University decision/policy. It was agreed that the wording would be reviewed following the concerns raised and the issue would be brought back to the next Court meeting for discussion and formal approval.

Court agreed that the Standing Orders would be approved except for the two areas as outlined above.

*CRT/2023/43.3 Rector’s Election*

Court noted recent election Dr Ghassan Abu-Sittah was elected as the Rector from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2027.

It was noted that the rules and regulations for future Rectorial Elections would be reviewed in line with Ordinances and legislation relating to Charity Trustees. It was also agreed that the support for the hustings and installation of the Rector would also be reviewed.

*CRT/2023/43.4 SRC Elections*

Court noted the following candidates were successful in the Spring 2023 SRC elections and would take up sabbatical officer posts on 1 July 2024:

President: Pablo Moran Ruiz

VP Education: Heri Busquier Cerdan

VP Student Support: Iris Duane

VP Student Activities: Angelica Wilson

*CRT/2023/43.5 Organisational Change*

Court noted the following proposals that Organisational Change Governance Committee (OCGC) had confirmed:

Court Office - There was an increasing demand and pressure on the Court Office; the additional roles would allow the Secretary and Clerk of Court to delegate more activities and support for the Court Committees and Home Office Licensing work.

Transformation Team – given the resetting of the service and University’s ambitions for the programme, it was the right time to amend the existing team structure. A total of 4 roles would be made redundant but staff may be eligible to be considered for one of the 5 new roles.

MVLS Finance Office – the finance staffing structure within MVLS College Services needed to be repurposed to support the College/University ambitions and operational requirements. The proposal was to create two distinct functions in the staffing structure which would lead to the creation of 6 new roles within the finance team; the roles of 2 existing members of staff would no longer exist in the new structure but they may be eligible to be considered for one of the new roles.

Academic Services – by removing the additional leadership layer, Academic Services would mirror the organisational structure in Student Services with one leadership post affected.

*CRT/2023/43.6 Court Strategy Day 2024*

Court noted the Strategy Day was scheduled for Tuesday 24 September and the programme for the day was currently being drafted. Court noted that it would be beneficial to have an update on the outcomes from the last Strategy Day which could then inform the planning for the next Strategy Day. Court also encouraged the SRC to lead a session at the Strategy Day on the student experience.

*CRT/2023/43.7 Head of School Appointments*

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

College of Arts and Humanities

*Head of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures*

Professor Stephen Forcer had been re-appointed as the Head of the School for a further year until 31 July 2025.

College of Science and Engineering

*Head of the School of Chemistry*

Professor Justin Hargreaves had been re-appointed as Head of the School until July 2026.

*Head of the School of Computing Science*

Professor Simon Gay had been re-appointed as Head of the School until July 2026.

*Head of the School of Physics and Astronomy*

Professor David Ireland had been re-appointed as Head of the School until July 2026.

College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences

*Head of the School for Infection and Immunity*

Professor Julia Edgar had been appointed as the Head of the School for four years from 1 April 2024 for 4 years.

*CRT/2023/43.8 Gender Representation Objective*

Court noted the report and approved the publication of the report following minor modification.

*CRT/2023/43.9 Glasgow Green - The University of Glasgow’s Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan*

Following the recent appointment of Roddy Yarr as the Director of Sustainability, it had been agreed that the annual update to Court would be provided at the next Court meeting. At the meeting it was suggested that it would be beneficial to have an update on offsetting, plans for reducing business travel and how staff would be supported, the use of PV shields from China and any possible links to Chinese slavery.

Court members were invited to email the Clerk with suggestions on areas they would like further information on.

*CRT/2023/43.10 CIVIS European University Alliance*

Court noted that the University had entered into CIVIS European University Alliance. The University of Glasgow was an associate member of CIVIS - a European Civic University. The CIVIS alliance had been selected as one of the first 17 pilot European Universities and was funded by the EU through the European Universities initiative under the ERASMUS+ programme. The partnership had progressed and it was now proposed that a formal CIVIS Alliance Agreement and a Legal Entity Agreement should be signed by all partners.

Court approved the signing of the CIVIS Alliance Agreement and Legal Entity Agreement.

*CRT/2023/43.11 Ordinance 211 – General Council Membership*

Court noted the final version of the Ordinance which had been sent out for public consultation with final confirmation received from the General Council in January 2022. The formal submission to the Privy Council was delayed whilst the University clarified and amended the University Regulations for Post Graduate Diploma students to attend Graduations without becoming members of the General Council. Court was now invited to approve the formal submission.

Court approved the submission of Ordinance 211 – General Council Membership to the Privy Council.

**CRT/2023/44. Student Matters, including: SEC Report; SRC President update**

*CRT/2023/44.1. Rector update*

Court noted the Rector’s apologies and no substantive matters were raised.

*CRT/2023/44.2. SRC update*

The SRC President reported that the SRC Sabbatical elections had taken place and congratulated Pablo Moran Ruiz on his election as the SRC President from 1 July 2024. It was also reported that the SRC continued to work on the cost-of-living working group, digital poverty, the use of mandatory unpaid placements, and ‘Disabling the Narrative’ campaign.

It was also reported that the SRC had recently held the Student Teaching Awards which had been a very successful evening.

*CRT/2023/44.3. Student Experience Committee*

Court was informed that the Student Experience Committee had met recently and noted that there had been discussions in relation to Complaints Annual Report, Substance Abuse and Harm Reduction initiative, review of disability and reasonable adjustments and relocation of Sport to Student Services.

The Convener thanked the SRC President for her report.

**CRT/2023/45. Reports of Court Committees**

*CRT/2023/45.1 Finance Committee*

Gavin Stewart, chair of the Committee, outlined the report from the meeting of the Committee which included an update on the College budget meetings and thematic strategy meetings. The Committee also approved the investment requests for £3.25m to extend the life of 40 Bute Gardens, £2.5m for VRF CL3 Animal Suite, and £14.3m for the Investment Zone – Plot J and Plot G, noting that the last of these was not in the Investment Plan and that adjustments would be made where necessary to cover this cost.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2023/45.2 Estates Committee*

Stuart Hoggan, chair of the Committee, outlined the report from the Committee which provided an update on the continued issues with the implementation of the reactive and planned maintenance contract, a presentation on the Portfolio and Programme system, an update on RIBA Stage 1 for the new Biological Research Facility, and the results of the Townhouse condition survey which Court noted could be a significant cost to the University.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2023/45.3 IPSC*

Frank Coton, chair of the Committee reported that the Committee had covered several topics including cyber security, an update on the Investment Plan, a review of a business case for an Enterprise Integration system, a review of the presentation on strategic alignment from the January 2024 meeting, an update on strategic risks, an update of the University's new Project Portfolio Management (PPM) tool, an update on Project Eos and a review of the programme/project reports.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2023/45.4 Audit & Risk Committee*

Elspeth Orcharton, chair of the Committee, outlined the report from the Committee which provided an update on the Internal Audit reports and benefits realisation. Court noted that the Committee had raised concerns about the Animal Welfare Internal Audit and the outstanding recommendations which had a revised due date of March 2025; two out of the three high-risk overdue items related to this and a Home Office audit since the work of the Internal Auditors had highlighted further actions required. It was reported that the University Secretary was working with key staff to review the timings relating to the implementation of these recommendations.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2023/45.5 People and Organisational Development Committee*

David Duncan outlined the report from the Committee, which provided an update on the key Performance and Reward activity, spanning the University’s Early Career Development Programme (ECDP), PDR, Academic Promotion, Zone Movement, Colleague Engagement Survey, UKVI related developments and their associated operational implications.

A query was raised about pay negotiations with UCEA and it was noted that a meeting would take place early next week. A query was also raised about the colleague engagement surveys and the overall engagement index and it was reported that this would be based on a set of predefined questions.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2023/45.6 Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee*

Court noted the report and no substantive items were raised.

Court also received the annual report. Members noted that it would be beneficial to make the report more visual and add in details about human health, sustainability and ensure that the executive summary of the report included the 3 main take aways from the report.

The Principal, Senior Vice Principal, Clerk of Senate and Executive Director of Finance left the meeting.

*CRT/2023/45.7 Remuneration Committee*

The Convener of Court noted that the Convener of Court-Elect had agreed to Chair the Search Committee. The Convener of Court-Elect provided an update to Court on the progress of the Committee to date. It was agreed that regular updates would be provided as part of the University Secretary’s Report going forward.

The Principal, Senior Vice Principal, Clerk of Senate and Executive Director of Finance returned to the meeting.

The report was noted.

*CRT/2023/45.8 Nominations Committee*

Nicola Dandridge, chair of the Committee, outlined the report from the Committee, which provided an update on the recruitment of two new co-opted members of Court.

Court noted that the Nominations Committee was recommending the reappointment of Martin Glover – People and Organisational Development Committee for a second term Jan 2024 to Dec 2026 (8 years total) and Kenny Robertson – Information Strategy and Policy Committee for a second term from June 2024 to June 2028 (8 years total). Court approved the reappointments.

The report was noted.

**CRT/2023/46. Senate Matters**

Court noted the report from the Senate meeting held on the Wednesday 9 April 2024. The Clerk of Senate outlined the key areas which included an update on the Transformation Programme, Learning and Teaching Strategy, Senate Effectiveness Review, the Rectorial Election and an update on the upcoming exam period.

The Convener of Court thanked the Clerk of Senate for the update.

**CRT/2023/47. Any Other Business**

*CRT/2023/47.1 Court Sub Committee Reports*

The Convener of Court noted that following her regular meetings with Court members a query had been raised about the details included on the Court context cards. Court agreed that chairs of the sub-committees would be asked to add this to the end of the agenda as a standing item for each meeting to ensure that the Court context cards were being completed with the key points for Court to focus on.

**CRT/2023/48. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Court will be held on Tuesday 18 June 2024 at 2pm followed by the Annual Court Dinner. A Pre-Court briefing will take place at 12pm.