

University of Glasgow – General Council Half-Yearly Meeting (by Zoom)

16 July 2024

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chancellor, Dame Katherine Grainger, opened the meeting and welcomed members to the second General Council Half Yearly meeting of 2024.

2. Minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved; the meeting was quorate.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Principal's Address and Questions

Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli provided an overview of University business since the last General Council meeting in January 2024.

University Performance

It was noted that it was an increasingly challenging fiscal climate for universities across the UK for a variety of reasons including funding cuts, uncertainty in international student markets and legislative changes related to international student visas. However, the University of Glasgow had continued to perform well and was in a strong financial position, taking forward investments in staff, Research, Learning & Teaching and the estate.

Budgetary Approach

An overview of the budgetary approach for the forthcoming year was provided. It was noted that the budget was contingent on international student recruitment and was approved by Court in June 2024.

During the discussion it was noted that a number of different scenarios were being developed and the University was in a strong position and would respond once international student recruitment figures were known .

Rankings

It was noted that the University of Glasgow had been ranked 12th in the world in the 2024 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. The THE Impact Rankings measured universities' performance against the [17 UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), which aimed to improve global health and education, reduce inequality, drive economic growth and tackle climate change. This marked a one-place improvement from the 2023 ranking, positioning the university as the top institution in Scotland and third overall among UK universities.

The University of Glasgow was also ranked 78th in the [2025 QS World Rankings](#). The results meant the University of Glasgow ranked 11th in the UK. The University of Glasgow was ranked in the world top 50 in three Indicators: Sustainability (20th), International Research Network (30th) and International Students (49th).

Honorary Graduates

An overview of new Honorary Graduates welcomed to the University was provided. These included Dr Kevin Rudd (former Prime Minister of Australia), Professor Takaaki Kajita (Co-Recipient of the Nobel Prize for Physics), Razan Al-Mubarak (President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature), Daron Acemoglu (Economist) and Polly Jones (Head of the Trussell Trust).

Collaboration

The University had signed a number of new Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) both locally and globally. This included a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Peer Works - a programme delivered by Prosper -The Productivity Institute at the University of Manchester, and its Scotland Productivity Forum, led by the University of Glasgow. It was noted that the work undertaken by the Productivity Institute had featured quite significantly in some of the new UK government policy statements.

Research Funding

It was reported that the University had had a great deal of success in securing significant research funding over the last six months. The University of Glasgow was one of 10 UK hubs to receive a share of £80 million from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) for the new AI Collective Intelligence Initiative.

Moreover, the University would lead the Scotland element spoke of a new £5 million hub which aimed to deliver faster and impactful action in the UK to help all four nations prepare better for the projected effects of climate change. The new Maximising UK Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) hub, led by Kings College London, was funded by UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) and the Department for Food and Rural Affairs.

Finally it was reported that University of Glasgow researchers would play a leading role in Population Health Improvement UK (PHI-UK), a new network to improve population-wide health. The University would benefit from a share of the £35 million pound investment by UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) through the School of Health and Wellbeing.

Health Innovation Hub

The University of Glasgow continued to grow its influence on the city in terms of innovation. The University had entered into a partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Glasgow City Council to establish the Glasgow Riverside Innovation District (GRID), which aimed to accelerate an inclusive approach to innovation. The partnership was intended to create an environment which would boost existing collaborations with industry and encourage the formation of new ones in some of the most dynamic sectors of the economy. The formation of GRID had enabled the University to work collectively with the partners in a quadruple helix approach, working across academia, industry, government, and local community to drive sustainable economic growth.

It was noted that the first tenants may be able to move into the newly constructed Health Innovation Hub by the end of 2024. It was anticipated that the hub would catalyse new innovations in life sciences, chemistry, digital chemistry and enabling technologies and healthcare. It was noted that this would provide a much needed space for some of Glasgow's most innovative enterprises, and included Chemify.

Finally, the University was keen to make a commitment to its civic responsibility for local communities. As such, community groups, charities and projects within the GRID area had been invited to apply for the GRID Civic Fund for a grant of up to £5,000. This fund was set up by the University to support communities in its surrounding areas, and was intended to help local groups make an enduring positive impact for those living, working and learning within GRID.

Lord Kelvin 200

It was reported that the University was celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Lord Kelvin in 2024. Building on the success of the Adam Smith 300 programme in 2023, the University was featuring a series of events throughout the year themed around Lord Kelvin's legacy of innovation, invention and inspiration. The University's Muzumdar-Shaw Advanced Research Centre (ARC) was hosting the Lord Kelvin: Beyond Absolute Zero exhibition as part of the Glasgow Science Festival. Moreover, there was displays of rarely-seen artifacts from the University's Special Collections and

public lectures in partnership with the Institute for Physics & the Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineers. The Principal encouraged members to review the University webpages for a full listing of all upcoming events.

It was noted that the Principal had announced his decision to retire in September 2025 and the search process for a successor was underway. The Principal took the opportunity to thank the General Council for all of the support, noting it had meant a great deal to the Principal and the wider University.

5. Report from the Convenor of Court, Elizabeth Passey

The Convenor of Court, Elizabeth Passey, provided an update on University Court. The update included an overview of University Court Governance and the Membership of Court along with an outline of key positions.

An update was given on the business, which included:

- Campus Development & review of capital plan – monitoring completion of buildings and planning for future projects whilst maintaining the historic estate.
- Approvals of annual budget and financial statements and review of divestment.
- Monitoring of the Strategic Plan and Key Performance Indicators.
- Briefings on: Information & Technology Policy and Strategy, Student Experience Strategy, Research Strategy, Sustainability – Glasgow Green, Learning & Teaching Strategy, Fundraising Campaigns.
- Staff and student-related matters include the Cost of living, Pay and Pensions, Health & Safety, mental health, Approval of annual report to the Scottish Funding Council, ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.
- Court Effectiveness Review – recommendations currently being implemented.
- Oversight of the recruitment process for the new Vice Chancellor and Principal.

It was noted that the new Convenor of Court, Gavin Stewart, would take over from 1 August 2024 and E Passey passed on her best wishes. E Passey provided some reflections on the eight years that she had been in office which included Brexit and COVID, a 12% increase in student growth, a 62% increase in staff growth and a significant increase in income growth and research income growth. E Passey highlighted that it was a phenomenal team of individuals who lead the University and during her period in office, there had been 72 different members of Court, and wished to record thanks to each of them. E Passey closed her final official engagement on behalf of the University of Glasgow, and expressed thanks to everyone in the General Council for their participation and interest.

The Chancellor expressed thanks to Elizabeth Passey and noted that the style and manner that Elizabeth had led during her term as Convenor of Court had been exceptional. In particular, the Chancellor reported that Elizabeth's passion, intelligence, inclusivity, ambition and care for the University had enriched the institution as a whole. The Principal also expressed thanks to Elizabeth Passey noting that she had made a hugely significant contribution to the University over the last 8 years and had been an excellent Convenor of Court.

6. Report from the Convenor of the General Council Business Committee, Dr Cameron Marshall

The Convenor of the General Council Business Committee, Dr Cameron Marshall, opened by providing an overview of the General Council Business Committee (GCBC). It was noted that the committee convened four times per year on behalf of the General Council and discussed topics that were of relevance and importance to the University. The Business Committee made representations to the Court on Ordinances and Resolutions before formal approval or submission to the Privy Council.

Dr Cameron Marshall provided an update on behalf of the General Council Business Committee.

Retirement of Director of Academic Services

Dr Marshall acknowledged the retirement of the Director of Academic Services, Jack Aitken, who had dedicated over 20 years to the University, and had been a strong supporter of the General Council for many years, and expressed thanks for his dedication throughout the years.

Campus Development

The Convenor of the General Council Business Committee reported that the recent campus developments were very impressive, particularly around the former Western Infirmary site. It was noted that the Business Committee members had recently received a tour of the new Advanced Research Centre (ARC) building. In particular, the Convenor cited the architecture, the openness of the building and the innovative academic work taking place within the ARC building as remarkable.

Student Support

It was noted that the Business Committee has continued to take a particular interest in student support, and a comprehensive presentation on this topic had been presented to the Business Committee recently by Dr Neil Bowering. The Convenor noted that he was impressed by the University's dedication to enhancing and resourcing Student Support services cross-institution.

Admissions

The General Council Business Committee recently received a presentation from Rachel Sandison, Deputy Vice Chancellor - External Engagement, regarding University admissions, particularly related to contextualised admissions. The Convenor noted that the Business Committee had been particularly impressed by the strong governance structures that are in place regarding admissions including a largely centralised admissions process. It was noted that the admissions policy is focussed on admissions being fair, consistent, transparent, but also contextual. The contextualised admissions element applies to those who live in Scotland and enables the University to consider all circumstances faced by individual applicants, which may have prevented them meeting the standard entry requirements and make adjusted offers of entry accordingly, and was contingent on the applicant completing a pre-entry programme.

The Chancellor thanked the Convenor of the General Council Business Committee for the detailed update.

7. AOCB

The Chancellor, Dame Katherine Grainger, expressed thanks to all attendees for their continued support of the General Council.

No other business was reported.

8. Date of next meeting

28 January 2025

(MEETING CLOSED)