

UNIVERSITY COURT – AGENDA

Tuesday 11 May 2021
Business Meeting – 09.15-11.00

Apologies: None received

Declarations of interest: None

Introduction		
1.	Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021	Paper A 5 mins
2.	Matters arising	Oral
3.	Principal's Report <i>Principal</i>	Oral 10 mins
Substantive items		
4.	COP26 update <i>Associate Principal, Research & Innovation</i>	Oral 10 mins
5.	Budget setting: context and process <i>Chief Financial Officer</i>	Oral 15 mins
6.	University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) Audited Accounts 2019/20 <i>USSA President, USSA Chief Executive</i>	Paper B 10 mins
Items for formal approval		15 mins
7.	Corporate Risk Register <i>University Secretary & Compliance Officer</i>	Paper C
8.	Amendment to the Ordinances: Senior Officer job title <i>University Secretary & Compliance Officer</i>	Paper D



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2019

Committee reports <i>(for noting, unless otherwise stated)</i>		<i>5 mins</i>
9.	Executive Team	Paper E
10.	Senate	Paper F
11.	Court Business Group	Paper G
12.	Audit & Risk Committee	Paper H
13.	Enterprise & Investment Committee	Paper I
14.	Estates Committee	Paper J
15.	Remuneration Committee	Paper K
Closing remarks		<i>5 mins</i>
16.	Any other business	
	Date of next meeting Thursday 17 June 2021, 14.00-17.00	

Stakeholder Meeting (11.15 – 12.15) – an event within the online [Engage Week](#) programme

Attendees: Lead Court members (i.e. office-bearers; and other Court members optionally), Executive Team, members of Leadership Group, the Student Executive, and open to other members of staff and students and the wider community, including business and industry stakeholders ([advance registration required](#)).

- 1. Welcome and introduction to the role of Court**
Convener of Court
- 2. Presentation on the University's strategy and recent achievements**
Principal
- 3. Q&A**

Court strategy session (13.00 – 15.30)

Attendees: Court members, Executive Team, Special Advisors, DAPs, PS Directors, other Strathclyde Acceleration Team members.

- 1. Welcome**
Convener of Court, Principal
- 2. Breakout sessions:** Acceleration Teams with assigned Court leads and Court members
- 3. Plenary session: group feedback and discussion** (Court leads to lead feedback for each group)

MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT
2 March 2021
Meeting held by videoconference

Present: Dame Sue Bruce (Convener), Paula Galloway (Vice-Convener), Professor Sir Jim McDonald (Principal), Virginia Beckett, Dr Jeremy Beeton, Linda Brownlow, Kayla-Megan Burns, Ronnie Cleland, Alison Culpan, Gillian Hastings, Stephen Ingledew, Dr Barbara Keating, Susan Kelly, Professor Scott MacGregor, William McLachlan, Dr Katharine Mitchell, Malcolm Roughead, Marion Venman, Peter Young, Andrew Eccles

Attending: Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Douglas Brodie, Adrian Gillespie, Professor David Hillier, Professor Atilla Incecik, Dr Veena O'Halloran, Professor Ian Rivers, Gordon Scott, Professor Eleanor Shaw, Rona Smith, Professor Iain Stewart, Steven Wallace, Dr Daniel Wedgwood

Apologies: Chelbi Hillan, Heather Stenhouse

Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed Court members and attendees to the meeting and noted apologies as above.

No interests were declared.

1. Minutes

Court **approved** the minutes of the meetings held on 26 November 2020 and 25 January 2021.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising, other than those covered in the main agenda.

3. Principal's Report and update on COVID-19 pandemic response

The Principal updated Court on recent developments, including management of the impacts on the University of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, in particular the return to 'lockdown' conditions in the early months of 2021. Key points included the following:

- The Executive Team had maintained oversight of essential operational matters and the continuation or re-introduction of various measures to promote student and staff wellbeing in the current situation. Members noted that the re-introduction of 'rest and recuperation' days had been particularly appreciated by staff, as respite from the challenges of lockdown.
- All essential on-campus teaching and research activity was approved by the Executive Team on the basis of rigorous risk assessments and in line with Scottish Government and public health guidance.
- The University was also looking to the next academic year. Particular support needs were likely to arise, given the reduced on-campus activity during the majority of the current year and the unusual circumstances in which new young entrants would have completed their school education.
- All students who had been on placements abroad when pandemic restrictions were first imposed had now returned home, to the UK or other home countries. The Principal thanked University colleagues who had provided regular support to these students throughout the relevant period.
- Strathclyde researchers had been key members of the team that produced the first national report on the effectiveness of the UK's Covid-19 vaccination programme, which had received international attention and would inform the global response to the pandemic.

The University Secretary & Compliance Officer (USCO) gave an overview of Health & Safety matters, including the following:

- Small numbers of cases of Covid-19 had been recorded among the student and staff populations. There was no evidence of transmission of the virus through on-campus learning activity: there had been three known cases among relevant students and these were not connected to each other.
- There were on-going discussions at sector level to establish whether on-campus quarantine arrangements might be permitted in the future for students arriving from overseas, in place of the current obligatory hotel-based quarantine.
- The lateral flow testing centre at the Barony Hall was operating for two mornings per week during the current lockdown period.
- Following the death of a student, Campbell Hunter, in an accident on campus in December 2020, there had been a full police investigation and the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) had been notified. The HSE had visited to inspect the site of the accident and construction work had begun to remove the risk of any similar accidents. The entire campus was being evaluated to identify and remove any comparable hazards.
- The Independent Review Implementation Group (IRIG) was working to ensure full implementation of all of the recommendations of the review by Craig Sandison QC into historic inappropriate behaviour by a former staff member. IRIG included representatives of the students' union and trade unions and other members of staff and had met twice so far.

The Principal also noted the following:

- The University had been successful in its bid for low-interest 'Financial Transactions' loans from the Scottish Funding Council, which would support a number of capital projects around the University. In total, Strathclyde was expected to receive around a third of the most recent tranche of loans available to the sector through this route. It was noted that this reflected confidence in the University as an investible institution.
- Additional funding had been announced by the Scottish Government for the Further Education and Higher Education sectors, including additional research funding. It was not yet known how the relevant funds would be allocated across the sector.
- The Visioning Groups around which Court's November strategy session had been structured had concluded their work and were to be succeeded by Strathclyde Acceleration Teams, with a focus on identifying and implementing concrete actions. The work of these Teams would be considered in Court's May strategy session.
- Work to manage the impacts of the UK's withdrawal from the EU continued, with on-going support for affected staff and students a priority. Work was in hand to clarify the new fee status of EU applicants, which would depend on individuals' circumstances, and data continued to be monitored to track all relevant impacts and identify any areas of concern.
- The University's REF submission was nearing completion, in line with the detailed briefing and timeline that Court had received at the additional meeting on 25 January 2021. The Principal thanked Court members who had assisted with preparations, including on-going review of selected case studies.
- The process for recruitment of a Chief Information Officer was nearing its conclusion.
- The Principal would shortly begin a new round of engagement sessions with staff from across the University.

Court **noted** the Principal's report.

4. Q2 Business Report 2020/21

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) summarised the financial elements of the Business Report and Q2 forecast. Taking into consideration the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the University was in a good position, its debt covenants and cash position being secure through the balance of the academic year.

While income and expenditure had both been affected significantly by the pandemic, there had been some recovery in income and improvements in the cost base since Q1: in particular, the introduction of additional January PGT intakes and careful cost control had partly mitigated the previously forecast shortfall to budget.

The value of the University's investment portfolio had seen a significant recovery, approaching pre-pandemic levels. Income achievement had been substantially de-risked, with residences income now reflecting a prudent assumption of c.20% occupancy for the balance of the academic year.

In summary, the Q2 forecast was balanced between risk and opportunity. Initial modelling work had begun regarding the next academic year. While much uncertainty remained, a number of external developments, notably the roll-out of Covid-19 vaccines, gave grounds for cautious optimism.

Members enquired about scenario planning with regard to the financial impact of different levels of student recruitment, given that patterns of applications and conversion under the current conditions were likely to differ from historical norms. It was also noted that a strategic group had been established to review the processes and triggers for any potential mitigation actions.

The Director of Strategy & Policy summarised the non-financial elements of the Business Report. Key points included the following:

- While there had been some slowing in current research activity because of the pandemic, research application value showed a strong upward trajectory.
- There was growth also in the value of research awards, although this was masked in year-on-year comparisons by an outlying high-value award received early in the previous year.
- PGR recruitment was broadly positive in the circumstances. The total PGR population figures were known to include PGRs who had been granted extensions in response to the pandemic, with support from UKRI and from the University; the underlying situation would become clearer and data would be appropriately adjusted towards the end of the academic year.
- Student recruitment data were complicated by the uncertain status of a number of EU applicants in the wake of the UK's withdrawal from the EU (as noted under item 3).
- Intakes for the new January starts for selected PGT courses had been fully evaluated and showed a substantial number of new applicants alongside deferred applications from the previous autumn.
- International student recruitment at PGT level had re-aligned towards more concentration in markets that historically submitted applications later in the recruitment cycle, making year-on-year comparisons more complex. Current numbers were expected to rise in Q3. It was noted that current trends compared favourably with historical performance, although were lower than the exceptionally high levels of applications at this stage in the cycle for entry in 2020/21.
- The number of PGT applications from Home and RUK students was high, indicating reputational strength, including positive perceptions of the University's handling of the pandemic crisis, alongside a reflection of increased demand as a result of the broader economic circumstances.
- There had been a rise in overall entry tariff and a narrowing of the entry tariff gap between Widening Access students and other groups, as defined by SIMD quintiles.
- There had been a marked increase in retention figures, including a narrowing of the SIMD gap. It was unclear at this stage to what degree this reflected the pandemic conditions or would continue in the longer term.

It was noted that offers made to applicants were delayed relative to other years, in part because of an extension to the UCAS deadline and also in order to allow time to assess the fee status of EU students.

Members discussed the potential influence of world events on international recruitment. It was noted that the University regularly monitored market demand, utilising the insights of partners in addition to internal expertise, and was pro-active in identifying new opportunities and educational needs. It was well placed to serve growing and emerging markets.

Graduate employment was also discussed, recognising the likely additional challenges for graduates entering the economy following the impacts of the pandemic. The University had a working group to consider potential actions around employability and career development. Its strong links to industry provided many opportunities to enhance employability, while the University's portfolio of postgraduate courses also provided the means for graduates to increase skills and knowledge and to differentiate themselves in the job market.

Members enquired about and received an update on progress in construction of the Learning & Teaching Building.

Court **noted** the Business Report.

5. Strategic Plan 2020-25: Mid-year progress report 2020-21

The Director of Strategy & Policy summarised key points from the mid-year progress report on the Strategic Plan KPIs, noting that the report fell approximately one year after the launch of the Strategic Plan, and that this period roughly coincided with the greatest impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic to date. These impacts included positive movements in some areas, such as the PGR population and retention, as noted above, which would be monitored to track whether progress would be sustained into the longer term. Similarly, greenhouse gas emissions (KPI 16) had been positively affected by the pandemic context (i.e. reduced emissions). KPI 13, measuring the internationalisation of staff, was on track despite the potential challenges created by both the pandemic and the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

In relation to KPI 14, it was noted that the Gender Pay Gap had narrowed and an action plan was in development to accelerate progress.

Recognising the diverse impacts of the pandemic, members discussed the importance of the stage of emergence from the crisis. Members agreed that the report showed many signs of organisational resilience and agreed that it was appropriate to maintain the current KPIs and milestones for the time being, with time remaining over the period of the current strategic plan to make an informed and duly contextualised assessment of progress. Prioritisation would be crucial on emergence from the pandemic conditions; it was noted that this was an objective of the new Strathclyde Acceleration Teams and would be a theme of the May Court strategy session. The University was well positioned to contribute to the wider recovery and, within this, to address government priorities, given its integral role in both innovation and skills provision in relation to key industries.

Court **noted** the mid-year performance update.

6. Preparations for COP26

The Associate Principal, Research & Innovation gave an overview of the University's preparations for the COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference that was to be held in Glasgow later in the year. This provided significant opportunities for participation by the University and there were plans to showcase the University's achievements, create a legacy in teaching, research and innovation activities and advance the University's own net-zero greenhouse gas emission plans.

Details were given of the internal structures in place for the development of activity in all relevant areas, overseen by an Advisory Group that reported to the Executive Team. The COP26 groups also interfaced closely with Sustainable Strathclyde, an existing framework capturing and stimulating extensive relevant activity across the University's academic and professional services departments.

The overall approach to COP26 was highly collaborative, in particular as members of Sustainable Glasgow but also working individually with a range of industrial partners and with the other universities in Glasgow. At the local level, collaboration with the students' union was an integral part of the approach.

The Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) would be central to Strathclyde's contribution and was working to ensure a strong academic legacy from the event. This would also be enhanced by Strathclyde's membership of the International Sustainable Campus Network and pending membership of the University of the Arctic network. There would also be a legacy in terms of partnership; a number of potential new partnerships in relevant areas were already under discussion.

A University COP26 communications strategy had been developed, with clearly identified audiences and key messages. This would draw on Strathclyde's history as a pioneer in, for example, efficient and clean energy, alongside current and forward-looking work.

Subsequent discussion covered the following points:

- Organisations across the economy were seeking to make rapid progress towards net zero aspirations but many lacked crucial expertise. Strathclyde was well placed to address many such gaps, whether

through partnership working or supply of appropriately skilled graduates. Involvement in COP26 would help the University to identify needs and opportunities.

- Education Strategy Committee would be assessing ways to further embed sustainability into the curriculum, building on existing initiatives led by the CSD.
- As Scotland's largest provider of teacher education, the University had significant opportunities to promote sustainability at a national level through education.
- The context of COP26 could also provide stimulus for entrepreneurship related to sustainability, which could be pursued under the Strathclyde Inspire strategy. Related activity was already underway within the Doctoral School.
- There might be opportunities to utilise existing national frameworks to boost the visibility of the University's communications in relation to the event, for example the Scotland Is Now campaign.
- Time would be allocated in the May Court strategy session for further discussion of relevant points.

Court **noted** the update.

Items for formal approval

7. Convener's Action: appointment to Remuneration Committee

Court **homologated** the appointment.

8. Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council

- Self-evaluation report for 2017-2020
- Interim Outcome Agreement for 2020-21

Court **approved** the Outcome Agreement Self-evaluation Report 2019-20 and the Interim Outcome Agreement 2020-21.

9. Complaints Handling Procedure

Court **approved** the procedure for implementation from 1 April 2021.

Item for information

Court received and **noted** the following items:

10. Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015): Annual Update

Court **noted** the update.

Committee Reports

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

11. Executive Team

12. Senate (relevant approval noted under item 9)

13. Court Business Group

14. Court Membership Group

Court **approved** extensions to the terms of office of Alison Culpan, Susan Kelly and Malcolm Roughead as lay members of Court to 31 July 2023.

15. Audit & Risk Committee

16. Staff Committee

17. Enterprise & Investment Committee

18. Estates Committee

19. AOB

The Director of HR noted that the deadline for applications to the Strathclyde Global Talent Attraction Programme and the Chancellor's Fellows programme had recently passed. Both the overall number of applications and the proportion of female applicants were higher than in the previous year.

Date of next meeting

- Tuesday 11 May 2021

**University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) Audited Accounts
2019/20
[RESERVED ITEM]**

The Students' Association published Financial Statements are available at:

<https://www.strathunion.com/about/finance/>

**Corporate Risk Register
[RESERVED ITEM]**

Amendments to the Ordinances

1. The Ordinances list the University's Senior Officers. These positions carry particular responsibilities and are subject to certain rules; for example, with regard to their recruitment.
2. At its meeting on 6 October 2020, Court approved the creation of a post of Chief Information Officer and the amendment of Ordinance 4.1.7, accordingly, to read as follows:

The Chief Information Officer, under the direction of the Principal, shall be responsible for the development and implementation of information strategy for the University and the strategic management of relevant Professional Services functions.

3. The University proceeded to recruit to this role, in line with Court-approved protocols, and entered into discussions with a preferred candidate. In the course of these discussions, it was agreed that the particular responsibilities of the new role, the key priorities of which are to drive digital transformation across the University, would be more precisely captured in the title Chief Digital and Information Officer.
4. It is therefore proposed that Ordinance 4.1.7 be amended to read as follows:

The Chief Digital and Information Officer, under the direction of the Principal, shall be responsible for the development and implementation of digital and information strategy for the University and the strategic management of relevant Professional Services functions.

5. The complete Ordinances can be viewed at [https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/strategyandpolicy/University_Ordinances_2020-21_\(Oct_20\).pdf](https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/strategyandpolicy/University_Ordinances_2020-21_(Oct_20).pdf)

Recommendation

6. Court is invited to **approve** the amendment to the University's Ordinances, as detailed above, in order to establish the new Senior Officer position with the preferred title and role.

Executive Team Report to Court

The Executive Team (ET) met on 23 February, 9 & 23 March and 1 & 21 April 2021. The following key items were discussed and are provided here for Court to note:

1. Management of the Covid-19 pandemic response

ET took and/or reviewed a number of decisions in key areas, including:

- approval of essential on-campus research and teaching activities under Covid-19 restrictions;
- guidance for Fieldwork and External Research Visits/Travel within the UK for Staff and Research Students;
- a proposal to further extend the duration of the student accommodation rent refund and eligibility for refund;
- recommendations relating to the repatriation of employees based overseas.

2. Health and Safety moment

Under the 'Safety Moment' led by the University Secretary and Compliance Officer, the Team took the opportunity at each meeting to discuss health, wellbeing and safety matters.

3. Pay and pensions

ET received regular updates on national pay negotiations and the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS).

4. Corporate Risk Register

ET noted that the Corporate Risk Register had integrated for the first time the Covid-19 risk register. ET approved the consolidation of the relevant risks from the previous non-Covid-19 Corporate Risk Register and the Covid-19 Corporate Risk Register into one register and agreed the top risks and mitigating actions in the Corporate Risk Register.

5. Student Recruitment

ET received regular updates on student recruitment and presentations on international student recruitment. ET also discussed the University's evolving engagement in China.

6. COP26 opportunities and preparation

ET received a presentation on the University's preparations for COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference taking place in Glasgow later in the year. The presentation outlined the highly collaborative approach that would be taken and also plans for showcasing the University's research in relevant areas and opportunities for advancing the University's own net zero emissions ambitions.

7. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

ET approved the University's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, which been reviewed and revised in accordance with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

8. Complaints Handling Report

ET noted the Q2 Complaints Handling Report.

9. Budget 2021-2022

Over a number of meetings, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) outlined the budgeting process, timeline and progress in formulating the 2021-2022 budget position.

10. Strath Union Presentation

The Strath Union President and team of Vice-Presidents delivered a presentation to ET on student perspectives on communication and the appropriate use of language.

11. Gender Pay Gap Action Plan

ET received an update on work to tackle the gender pay gap in the context of the University's Strategic Plan Vision 2025 and the upcoming publication of the University's Equal Pay Report.

12. Graduations 2021 and 2022

ET agreed that, in place of graduation ceremonies, online Conferment days would take place in summer 2021 due to the continuing uncertainty of pandemic-related restrictions. ET also agreed to investigate the potential to offer the choice of spring 2022 graduation ceremonies to 2020 and 2021 graduates.

13. Strathclyde Accelerations Teams – update

The Strathclyde Acceleration Team Leads provided an update on progress leading up to the 11 May Court meeting.

14. Scottish Funding Council (SFC) indicative university funding allocations for AY 2021-2022

The Director of Strategy & Policy and CFO provided an update on SFC 2021-22 indicative funding allocations, which had been published on 24 March 2021. For the University, the indicative grants for 2021-22 were overall £4.3M (4.6%) higher than the 2020-21 grant levels. The SFC would publish final allocations by the end of May.

15. USSA Financial Statements 2019-20

The CFO presented the USSA Financial Statements 2019-20. The Team noted that the cash reserves continued to be in a strong position and that the accounts had been prepared on a going concern basis. The Team expressed their appreciation of the work of the USSA Chief Executive, USSA President and Student Executive Committee Trustees for their careful and considered approach to the USSA Finances during a particularly challenging year.

16. Graduate Apprenticeships

ET discussed the University's position in relation to Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) programmes, in the context that ring-fenced SFC funding was guaranteed for only the first year of these four-year programmes, which were newly transferring to SFC from 2021-22 entry. ET agreed that the University would continue delivery of 2021/22 GA intakes and would continue to engage with the Scottish Government in relation to additional core of ring-fenced funding for future years.

17. Gender Pay and Equal Pay Report

ET received an update on the Gender Pay and Equal Pay Report 2021, noting that reporting in these areas was a requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duties.

Senate Report to Court

Senate met on 24 March 2021. The Senate meeting took place online (via the Zoom platform) in accordance with measures in place to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

This report provides Court with key points from the Senate meeting.

FOR NOTING

Senate invites Court to **note** the following items considered by Senate on 24 March 2021.

1. Report from Senate Business Committee:

Senate Business Committee (SBC) noted at its meeting on 11 March 2021 that, since the last meeting of Senate on 27 January 2021, the Collaborative Provision Agreement (CPA) Subgroup had processed six agreements (4 new collaborative articulation agreements, a renewal of an existing collaborative agreement and a letter to formalise a parallel route on an existing agreement) which were detailed in the respective Faculty reports to Senate.

Senate was invited to consider and approve the reports for the March Senate meeting. Senate approval was given where requested in the reports, and is documented in the formal minute of the Senate meeting.

Minor amendments to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Regulations 2021-22 had been approved by the Principal by Convener's Action on behalf of Senate following scrutiny by Senate Business Committee. This decision was recommended to Senate for homologation. The revised No Detriment Policy would be approved out of cycle post-Senate and published along with a series of FAQs.

2. Principal's Report

The Principal provided a comprehensive report on news and items of interest since the last meeting, covering the following key topics:

- Staff Engagement Sessions
- COVID-19 Latest
- Wellbeing
- Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group (IRIG) Update
- Strathclyde Medals
- Global Attraction Programme
- Financial Reporting
- Campus Update
- Strath Union Election Results
- Sustainability
- Strathclyde People highlighting staff and student achievements
- Research Wins

3. Student Voice Update

The StrathUnion President provided a Student Voice update, highlighting several areas of interest that included:

- Welcoming the University's No Detriment Policy;
- UK Government's [Turing Scheme](#) as a replacement for ERASMUS+;
- StrathUnion's involvement in a national campaign re changes to Housing Rights for students;
- StrathUnion Vice President (Inclusion) was progressing a Pledge not to use Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) in cases where sexual misconduct had taken place; and
- Congratulating StrathUnion Vice President (Sport), and the 507 athletes who had been involved in winning the inter-varsity Glasgow Taxis Cup, for the second year running.

4. Substantive Items of Business

Senate welcomed presentations on the following three topical and strategically-focussed items:

i. SOTAY: e-FIRST

Senate noted with interest a presentation on SOTAY (**Start of the Academic Year**) initiatives and e-FIRST (**education - Future Innovation and Reflection on Strathclyde Teaching**) which reflected on achievements and successes in AY2020-21, focussed on preparations and considerations for the AY2021-22 delivered by Professor Scott MacGregor, Vice Principal, and featured contributions from Vice Deans (Academic) from each of the Faculties on local plans.

The Vice Principal outlined key milestones in the timeline from 16 March 2020 when the University first pivoted to fully on-line learning and assessment in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, through to on-line induction for students at the start of AY 2020-21 and the delivery of the consolidation and development week online in January 2021, to the present date. The immersive experience gained and lessons learned through SOTAY during AY2020-21 provided an opportunity for colleagues to enhance and refine their skills in the design, development and delivery of innovative on-line learning teaching, learning and assessment, creating a solid backdrop ahead of AY2021-22. The growth in on-line modules was massively significant and the University had achieved the design and delivery of the entire academic year within 12 months (~3091 on-line modules).

Planning for AY2021-22 was underway with extensive input from Vice-Deans (Academic). It was not anticipated that there would be large numbers of students attending on campus classes in the short term; however, this would be dependent upon government guidance on social distancing. Priorities included:

- Transition support for school pupils and 1st year students who have not been on campus;
- Induction and Summer School programmes, identifying and addressing learning and skills gaps;
- Campus orientation and familiarisation;
- Co-ordination and balancing a variety of learning modes: *On-campus In-Person*, *On-campus On-line* and *Off-campus Online*;
- Co-ordination of consistency, student expectations and the range of In-Person versus Distributed learning and teaching that can be accommodated;
- Implications for staff and their teaching practice, with staff training available via the Organisational Staff Development Unit (OSDU);

- Underpinning logistics, planning and profiling of our academic programmes on campus;
- Utilisation of our Estate, with dynamic timetabling; and
- Recognition that we need to remain flexible, continue the excellent communications that have been established and retain a team approach.

The e-FIRST Framework encompassed three interconnected elements (Academic Delivery, Campus Environment and Student Experience) - mindful of external environmental factors such as guidance, behaviours and trends - with approval / reporting routes to Senate and the Executive Team co-ordinated through the Education Strategy Committee.

The Vice-Deans (Academic) in HaSS, SBS and Science and the Vice-Dean (Academic) Designate in Engineering reflected on achievements to date and outlined a number of challenges for AY 2021-22 within their respective Faculties.

ii. **Shaping the Future Survey 2020-21**

Brian Green, Deputy Associate Principal (Learning and Teaching) and Project Sponsor outlined the findings of the *Shaping the Future Survey 2020-21* that had been conducted in January 2021 capturing reflections on Semester 1 of the current academic year. The survey had been instigated by the Education Strategy Committee via the SoTAY Continuity Group and was developed and run by the Student Surveys Team in Education Enhancement. The survey had targeted the UG, PGT and PGR student populations. The proportion of responses was evenly split across Faculties (5606 responses were received in total representing 27.4% of students).

The results and analysis had already been shared across the Faculties and the summary listed headline messages only. Senate members had access to a full breakdown of reports on the *Shaping the Future Survey* available on the Student Surveys Sharepoint site (including figures by Faculty and Department/School for UG/PGT/PGR) and free text comments had been circulated to Heads of Department/Schools. A number of initiatives were already underway to address areas identified for development, for example the work that SBS was undertaking on community building. Initiatives featured Faculty Annual Reports which were reviewed by the Quality Assurance and Learning Enhancement Committees. It was anticipated that the opening of the new Learning and Teaching Building would help to facilitate social interactions between students. A Thematic Review of Student Mental Health was earmarked for the end of the current academic year.

iii. **Strathclyde Inspire**

Professor Eleanor Shaw, Associate Principal (Entrepreneurship and Education) welcomed the opportunity to present to Senate on Strathclyde Inspire - a new institution-wide Entrepreneurship Strategy - and began by sharing a reminder of Strathclyde's rich entrepreneurial history since 1986 – providing reassurance on Strathclyde's strong position in Entrepreneurship and Innovation. She outlined the Strategy's bold Vision and Mission and highlighted four key goals all of which were underpinned by Strathclyde's Values:

- Developing Entrepreneurial Mindsets
- Identifying and Supporting Entrepreneurial Talent
- Empowering Entrepreneurs
- Scaling Innovation-Driven Enterprises

Strathclyde Inspire would create a successful entrepreneurial ecosystem and a vibrant and engaged community of entrepreneurs harnessing the benefits of a 'Market Square' in the heart of Glasgow City Innovation District (GCID) through the development of an Entrepreneurship Hub, a Blended Events Programme and a Global Supporter Network.

The four pillars of Strathclyde Inspire were explored in detail, namely:

- **Entrepreneurship for All**
Entrepreneurship is about having a passion for problem-solving, being inspired to instigate change and create impact, identifying and acting on opportunities. Strathclyde would develop entrepreneurial mindsets, offering a suite of educational modules plus personal and professional development opportunities to help unlock the entrepreneurial potential & mindset of all Strathclyders - students & staff. Strathclyde Inspire would enhance the learning experience for all students; contributing to their employability and to industry recognition of benefits of the 'Strathclyde Graduate'. By 2025, there would be opportunities for all students to engage with an entrepreneurial learning opportunity (credit and non-credit bearing), working collaboratively across all Faculties and with the Careers Service, StrathUnion and other stakeholders to embed entrepreneurship learning opportunities.
- **Identifying Entrepreneurial Talent**
Emerging entrepreneurs and innovators would have a high awareness of the practical entrepreneurship support available and a clear understanding of the easily accessible entry points into Strathclyde Inspire. This would be achieved via a departmental Entrepreneurship Ambassadors Programme, ensuring that those with business ideas or research with commercial potential received the best available support to develop their ideas via a new Start-Up Programme and Stage-Gated Commercialisation Programme.
- **Empowering Venture Creators**
All of our innovation-led opportunities will have access to an unrivalled package of support through our enhanced investor-ready Accelerator including one to one advice, funding, bespoke training opportunities, regular cohort meetings, online presence to facilitate global interactions, access to alumni, industry and partner networks, support from a Virtual Board to accelerate investor-ready status, commercial champions, co-working space at the heart of GCID and pitching competition.
- **Enabling Innovation-driven Enterprises**
By addressing the early-stage funding gap through significant expansion of our investment capabilities and ensuring access to University innovation services, the environment needed for fast-growing businesses to thrive will be created. **[Reserved]**.

5. Items for Senate's Information

- i. Senate **noted** the proposed timetable for elections to Senate for Session 2021-22 which had been endorsed by the Senate Business Committee.
- ii. Senate **noted** the proposed scope and process of the Senate Effectiveness Review to enable members to reflect on and to review the effectiveness and the operation of Senate over the academic year 2020-21 in ongoing compliance with section 82 of the [Scottish Code of Good HE Governance \(2017\)](#) which had been endorsed by the Senate Business Committee.

6. Items for Senate's Approval

On the recommendation of ESC, Senate **approved** the introduction of the following:

- Proposal to Publish Academic Year Dates for a Rolling 5-year Period; and
- Student Module Evaluation Policy for introduction in 2021-22.

Court Business Group Report to Court

The following items were discussed by Court Business Group on 20 April 2021 and are provided here for Court to note.

1. Preparations for COP26: Update

CBG received an overview of the intended presentation to update Court on the University's preparations for the UN Climate Change Conference, 'COP26', which was to be held in Glasgow later in the year.

2. Budget setting: context and process

The Chief Financial Officer updated CBG on the on-going budget process, noting that Court was to be presented with the final budget for approval in June and would receive an update on context and process at the 11 May meeting. Initial reviews had been held with all Faculties and a second stage of reviews was planned.

Alongside the budget process, the University had responded to a call for information from the Scottish Funding Council requesting an update to Strategic Forecast. A forecast based on the Q2 Business Report, adjusted for known changes (both SFC Financial Transaction funding and additional funding received after forecast completion), had been submitted.

3. Corporate Risk Register

CBG reviewed the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) in advance of its presentation to Court, noting that what had previously been a separate Covid-19 Risk Register had now been integrated into the main CRR. Further adjustments were to be made in the next version of the CRR (to be presented to Court in October 2021), to further enhance the strategic aspect of the document.

CBG noted that risk ratings had increased in some areas as a result of this merging process and agreed that the new ratings appropriately reflected the impact of the pandemic on key areas of activity, and therefore risk in these areas.

4. University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) Audited Accounts 2019/20

The USSA President and Chief Executive presented the Student Union's accounts for the financial year 2019/20. The Covid-19 pandemic had inevitably affected the financial results for the year, especially through its impact on commercial services, which had performed strongly in the pre-pandemic part of the year. The balance sheet was affected by accounting requirements in relation to pension scheme liabilities, but was underlyingly healthy, including a strong and growing cash position. Major opportunities for the future included improved and expanded commercial activities following the planned move of the Union to the new Learning & Teaching building.

5. Court Agenda, 11 May 2021

CBG **approved** the agenda and **noted** the plans for the stakeholder meeting and strategy session that were to be held on the same day.

Report to Court from Audit & Risk Committee

The Audit & Risk Committee met via video conference on 18 March 2021. The following items were discussed by the Audit & Risk Committee and are provided here for Court to note:

1. COVID-19 Update

The USCO updated members on the work that was ongoing in the University to continue providing teaching, learning, research and student and staff services, during the COVID-19 pandemic and current Government restrictions. Members noted the following:

- The health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students remained the priority;
- Only essential activity, which could not be delivered remotely or postponed, and had been approved by the Executive Team, was permitted on campus;
- Planning had begun for the 2021/22 academic year but the level of restrictions that would still be in place was unknown;
- The more cautious approach of the Scottish Government carried risks for the sector in Scotland, particularly in relation to international student recruitment;
- There was concern about the impact on students of restrictions on campus learning continuing into the next academic year;
- The sector was seeking to reassure the Scottish Government that COVID-19 safety could be carefully managed.

2. Review of Corporate Risk Register

The USCO introduced the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) noting that the assessment of risk appetite had been paused due to the involvement of key personnel in the response to the pandemic. Risk appetite was still being considered in the approach being taken to the Corporate Risk register. A COVID-19 Risk Register, built around the categories and themes developed through the work already done on risk appetite, had been created early in the pandemic to sit alongside the Corporate Risk Register. Due to the ongoing nature of the pandemic and the resulting shift to a new 'business as usual', the decision had been taken to review both risk registers to extract the current top risks to the University's strategic objectives and establish one Corporate Risk Register based around the identified categories.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- The University would continue to be driven by Vision 2025 and would use its distinctiveness to reach out to potential students;
- The key reputational risk, at present, was the, still unknown, on campus restrictions that would be in place in the next academic year;
- Members highlighted that the University was not always taking sufficient credit for the mitigations put in place and that these mitigations and controls should be reflected in the register.

The Committee **endorsed** the University's top risks and mitigating actions for onward transmission to Court noting that a further review of the register and mitigating actions was ongoing.

3. IAS Activity Report

The Committee noted the progress against the delivery of the Audit Plan for the current academic year and also the following:

- The CFO had requested an additional review of the GCID Financial Model to reflect the impact of the pandemic both in terms of funding package and assumptions used. It had been agreed with the ARC Convener and USCO that this review would replace the planned Internal Communications Review particularly given that communications was included in the Covid 19 lessons learned review;
- The Review of RKES Grants and Contracts, which was a follow up of a Continuous Improvement project, would also be removed to allow capacity for a desktop review of the revised UKVI Policies and Procedures;
- IAS had reviewed the full listing of severance payments made in the calendar year 2020 and conducted detailed testing of the entire population. The results of the detailed testing noted that all severance payments followed due process, had been appropriately authorised and correctly calculated. All issues previously raised had been addressed;
- IAS recommended that consideration be given to reducing the severance cap, currently at £100k, to £95k. The Director of HR agreed to consider this as part of a planned HR review of the current policy and guidelines;
- Previously identified instances of employees in Estates accepting hospitality from suppliers during the potentially vulnerable period of tender contract award had been addressed by the Director of Estates. No instances of this practice had been noted in 2020 and IAS would continue to monitor this area in future reviews.

4. Review of COVID-19 Incident Management Response Lessons Learned Phase 2

The Head of IAS introduced the Report on the review of COVID-19 Lessons Learned Phase 2 and reminded members that this was the second of two phases and that an overall assurance evaluation had not been assigned and audit recommendations had not been raised. Phase 2 had focused on the University's approach to planning for the return of staff and students to campus.

There was strong consensus amongst stakeholders on the elements of the University's approach that had worked well and these included:

- The introduction of rest days / meeting free Fridays;
- Extensive collaboration between work streams and groups;
- Strong leadership from the Principal, Vice Principal and USCO;
- Overall strategic approach to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the University community had clearly been understood.

IAS was satisfied that the University had issued clear, timely communications to all key stakeholders during the planning and management of return and resume activities. It also found that the University had undertaken a rigorous approach to financial sustainability planning in relation to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Review of Authority to Appoint (ATA) Process

Members noted the Report on the review of Authority to Appoint (ATA) Process and the overall grading of substantial assurance. Only four low risks had been identified along with several examples of good practice. The review concluded that the ATA process operated satisfactorily with new posts, contract variations, extensions to existing contracts and replacement posts being afforded appropriate scrutiny before being fully approved.

6. Review of Budget Monitoring

Members noted the Report on the review of Budget Monitoring and the overall grading of substantial assurance. The review considered the operational effectiveness of controls and processes in place both centrally within the Finance Directorate and locally at a Faculty/Department/School/Directorate

level. Numerous examples of good practice were identified and only four low risks. One key example of good practice had been the introduction of a new monthly reporting process which had significantly enhanced budget management.

7. TRAC Return 2019-20

The CFO presented summary information on the University's TRAC Return for 2019-20, noting that the return had been approved by the University's Full Economic Costing Working Group (FECWG) and reviewed by the Internal Audit Service. No concerns had been highlighted by the process or the review.

The TRAC guidance stipulated a specific process to be followed in completing the return. The University allocated staff time to activities based on information from a time allocation survey which it was required to update at least every three years. The most recent Time Allocation Survey had been carried out in the current year and would be the basis for the 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 figures.

The Head of IAS confirmed that IAS had reviewed the return and found it to be high quality, supported by detailed records and completed in line with the guidance.

The Audit & Risk Committee **approved** the TRAC Return. It was acknowledged that, in approving the return, ARC relied on the robustness of the process in place to prepare the return in accordance with the appropriate guidelines, the quality of the underlying systems producing the required information and the overall review of the return (including the review by Finance and IAS).

8. Policy for the Offering or Receipt of Gifts, Hospitality and other Benefits (Appendix A)

The USCO reminded members that the Internal Audit Review of Gifts and Hospitality in 2019 had recommended that the Policy for Receipt of Gifts, Hospitality and Other Benefits should be updated. The Policy had been refreshed and feedback sought from HR and IAS. It had also been shared with the Trade Unions and endorsed by the Executive Team. An annual process for Senior Officers to record offers of gifts or hospitality had now been fully implemented.

ARC **approved** the Policy for the Offering or Receipt of Gifts, Hospitality and other Benefits.

9. Review of Committee Effectiveness

The Convener reminded members that the questions used in the effectiveness review were drawn from the Self-Review tool in the Committee of University Chairs' (CUC) "Higher Education Audit Committees Code of Practice". The response had been positive overall. The length and timing of ARC papers and discussions had been raised in previous reviews and was reflected here. Comments made would be taken into consideration, particularly in the timing of agenda items. Members had also agreed to consider aspects of training.

10. Review of Committee Terms of Reference

The Convener reminded members that the next external review of Court and its committees was due to take place in 2022 and was expected to consider the terms of reference of all committees of Court. Audit & Risk Committee considered that its Terms of Reference remained appropriate.

**Enterprise & Investment Committee
[RESERVED ITEM]**

Report to Court from Estates Committee

The Estates Committee met on 9 March 2021 and the following items were among those discussed:

1. Case for Investment Royal College Building Fire Safety Improvements Works

The Assistant Director (Estates Development and Operations) detailed the background to this paper on the requirement to implement high priority legislative fire safety improvement works to the Royal College building. The building had increased its occupancy and facilities over the preceding five years. This in turn necessitated the need to review the existing fire management arrangements to ensure that these were fit-for-purpose and compliant.

Based on the output from the last building condition survey Estates Services commissioned external consultants to carry out a full fire safety review of the Royal College Building. The output of this exercise was a fire strategy/safety report that specified the improvements that were necessary to make the building compliant with current Building Standards (Fire Safety) Scotland regulations.

This fire safety report considered the adequacy and condition of both the existing building fabric and building services' equipment and infrastructure, including all life safety systems. It provided recommendations to mitigate the risks and detailed an improved fire strategy for the building. It also detailed the design of a proposed, new fire evacuation strategy, which would be reliant on the completion of a four phased series of works. Approval for phases 1 and 2 was being sought at this stage, with works having been prioritised based on the level of risk and the scope of works to be delivered and taking cognisance of the need to undertake the work whilst the building was in operation.

The highest priorities to be addressed in phases 1 and 2 were the vertical and horizontal escape routes. Making these improvements would significantly reduce the level of risk and improve the fire safety provision within the building. Thereafter, phases 3 and 4, which are assessed as a lesser risk, are planned to be undertaken during the summer recess of 2022. The intention was to bring a further paper to Committee in due course, seeking funding approval for phases 3 and 4.

The Chief Financial Officer indicated that the initial phases of works would straddle two financial years and could be accommodated within the envelope of the capital plan. The Committee indicated that it was supportive of the proposals and pleased that this work was being undertaken while the campus was quiet. Regarding the stairwell at Montrose Street, it was confirmed that the intention was to build lobbies and protected zones.

Given that the main George Street entrance provides the first impression of the institution, the design of this is particularly important and the Committee advised that it wished to view the detail of these plans before proceeding with that element.

Estates was also asked to ensure the main disruptive work was done prior to students recommencing in mid-September and that the George Street and Montrose Street entrances be prioritised over that of John Street, given the former two bear the higher levels of traffic flow.

In line with the Schedule of Delegated Authority, the Committee:

- **recommends** to the Executive Team and Court that the implementation of the new fire evacuation strategy for the Royal College building and the progression of Phases 1 and 2 of the Fire Safety Works during summer 2021 is approved **[Reserved]**.

Subject to endorsement by the Executive Team, this matter will be submitted for consideration and approval to the June 2021 meeting of Court.

2. Update on Covid 19 Activities by Estates Services

The Director of Estates Services provided a verbal update on the measures being taken by Estates Services in regard to Covid on Campus.

All buildings remain in a 'ready' status. Research buildings are operating on a limited scale and an occupancy tracker is in use in all buildings to monitor the number of staff on campus. All the safety measures which were set up for the first opening in Semester 1 are still in place, including those for cleaning, provision of sanitisers and signage, among others. Estates is awaiting the latest Government advice on education and is ready to tailor its services accordingly.

The Committee also noted that many of the Library staff had remained on campus while the Library remained open for use by students, both those on campus and those at home, all of whom could access its facilities. Additionally, some undergraduate teaching, predominantly for Engineering and Science subjects, was taking place related to time critical study. These events were all being carefully managed and the Faculties concerned were limiting the number of students on site at any time, with appropriate social distancing in place.

A member of the Committee highlighted feedback from other Universities and that the current arrangements at Strathclyde compared very favourably with that offered by other institutions. It was also noted that the experience of those students who had benefited from on campus teaching was very positive.

[Reserved]

3. Estates Strategy Update

The Director of Estates presented an update on the Estates Strategy, focusing on the projects completed to date, those on site and the future pipeline of projects. She covered the parameters for the future development of the Estates Strategy, namely: the Journey to Net Zero, Space Planning as a response to agile working and lessons learnt from the COVID pandemic and Building Condition.

The committee expressed its satisfaction with the breadth and depth of information that was provided in the update.

REPORT OF THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2021

The following items are provided for Court to **note**:

A meeting of the Remuneration Committee was held on 29 January 2021. In line with the Remuneration Committee 'Terms of Reference and Composition,' approved by Court in 2018, the meeting was attended by Ronnie Cleland, (Senior Deputy Convener of Court and Convener of the Remuneration Committee), Dame Sue Bruce (Convener of Court and Remuneration Committee member), Gillian Hastings (Treasurer and Remuneration Committee member) and Marion Venman (Lay Member of Court, co-opted onto Remuneration Committee for this meeting). The Principal, Professor Sir Jim McDonald, was in attendance, other than for the item relating to his own remuneration. Gordon Scott, Director of Human Resources and Secretary to the Remuneration Committee, was also in attendance.

At the meeting, Remuneration Committee members were reminded that the Senior Deputy Convener of Court had sought Court members' guidance on any issues which Remuneration Committee should take into account in its decision making. No policy advice had been received on this occasion.

Remuneration Committee received feedback from the Director of Human Resources following his meetings held with key stakeholders, including Trade Union colleagues and Student Representatives, who had been consulted on the pay recommendations for senior leaders in advance of Remuneration Committee.

In making its decisions, Remuneration Committee considered: the 'Contribution Related Pay Policy: Remuneration Committee', which had been agreed by Court in 2018; the stakeholder consultation feedback; benchmark data on pay relativities for senior roles within the Higher Education sector from both the UCEA senior remuneration survey and the CUC survey of Vice Chancellor's Remuneration; pay increases for other University staff and pay increase within the wider economy; performance information concerning the individuals who were being recommended for contribution pay.

This year, due to the potential implications of Covid-19 on the University's finances, the Executive Team (ET) agreed that the amount set aside for Contribution Pay for all University staff should be reduced and that this should be used for non-consolidated bonus payments only. Given this reduced amount, ET agreed that the Senior Officers of the University and the Principal would not be awarded contribution pay of any kind this year, a position which was supported by Remuneration Committee.

Remuneration Committee approved modest one-off bonus awards to recognise exceptional performance for a small number of individuals from the Deputy Associate Principals and Professional Services Directors group.

A minute of the Remuneration Committee discussion is attached as Appendix A.

Ronnie Cleland, Deputy Convener of Court (Staffing) and Chair of Remuneration Committee
Gordon Scott, Director of Human Resources and Committee Secretary to Remuneration Committee

April 2021