



MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT

3 May 2022

Auditorium C, Technology & Innovation Centre

Present: Paula Galloway (Vice-Convener, in the Chair), Professor Sir Jim McDonald (Principal), Professor Scott MacGregor, Neelam Bakshi, Kirsty Bannatyne, Virginia Beckett, Elaine Blaxter, Linda Brownlow, Ronnie Cleland, Professor Jonathan Delafield-Butt, Andrew Eccles, Gillian Hastings, Stephen Ingledew, Mary Jo Jacobi, Councillor Ruairi Kelly, Susan Kelly, William McLachlan, Benn Rapson, Professor Jan Sefcik, Brenda Wyllie, Peter Young

Present by remote video link: Dame Sue Bruce (Convener).

Attending: Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Douglas Brodie, Gillian Docherty, Professor David Hillier, Professor Atilla Incecik, Dr Veena O'Halloran, Beth Lawton, Gordon Scott, Professor Eleanor Shaw, Professor Iain Stewart, Steven Wallace, Dr Daniel Wedgwood, Professor Stephen McArthur, Professor Duncan Graham.

Apologies: Melfort Campbell, Alison Culpan, Malcolm Roughead

Welcome and apologies

The Vice-Convener welcomed Court members and attendees to the meeting, noting that she was convening the meeting because the Convener of Court was able to join only by remote video link.

The Vice-Convener extended a particular welcome to Louise McKean and Wesley Rennison, who were attending their first meeting of Court since taking up the roles of University Compliance Officer and Director of Strategic Planning, respectively.

No interests were declared.

1. Minutes

Court **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022.

2. Matters arising

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

3. Principal's Report

The Principal updated Court on recent developments, including the following:

- The University had been nominated for seven awards across six categories in the Herald HE awards. Strathclyde Students' Union had also received two nominations.
- The University had been recognised as Scotland's best large employer at the S1 Jobs Recruitment Awards
- Recent changes in senior roles included
 - the new University Compliance Officer and Director of Strategic Planning commencing their roles (as noted above);
 - the appointment of Dr Stuart Fancey as University Secretary, due to commence on 6 June;
 - the recent appointment of Gordon Scott as Chief People Officer; and
 - the appointment of four new Deputy Associate Principals (DAPs), Professor Trish Connolly, Professor Madeleine Grealy, Dr Churnjeet Mahn and Professor Debbie Willison, plus the re-appointment of Brian Green as DAP with a new remit.

- The results of the 2021 REF exercise were due to be released shortly. The University would receive the results under embargo before publication and had a detailed plan for analysis and communications. The REF team was commended for their work in preparing the submission and planning for the results.
- Many graduates from the classes of 2020 and 2021 had returned to the University this spring to participate in graduation celebration ceremonies, Around 4000 graduates had taken part and many had expressed their gratitude for this opportunity to reclaim experiences that had been missed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Principal had carried out a round staff engagement sessions, with good levels of participation from across the University.
- The University has recently hosted a visit by the UK's Ambassador to China. Discussions had included the mobility of Chinese students in the context of continued Covid-19 lockdowns in parts of China.
- The Principal had recently co-chaired, with the First Minister, a meeting of the Scottish Government's Energy Advisory Board.
- The Scottish Funding Council's Indicative Funding Allocations for 2022/23 had been released at the end of March. It was noted that grants relating to research had not been announced, as they would be calculated with reference to the results of the REF.
- The University had won a number of significant research awards. The Principal outlined several examples of these.

In addition, the Chief People Officer gave a brief update on industrial relations.

Court **noted** the report.

4. Budget setting: context and process

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented an update on the budget process for the coming academic year. This process was to culminate in presentation of the budget for approval by Court at the 17 June Court meeting.

The overarching aim was delivery of a balanced budget in an uncertain environment. Within this, the intention was to create positive net operating cashflow and covenant compliance with improved headroom. This would be achieved by careful management of expenditure and a strong focus on income targets. It was noted that additional requests for resources that had not yet been approved would be considered separately and ranked according to priority.

The budget process methodology was outlined for each key area, noting the importance of adaptive modelling, given increased levels of uncertainty in the wider environment.

Court **noted** the presentation.

5. Project MERLIN

The Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) outlined MERLIN (Manufacturing, Electrification and Lightweighting at Inchinnan), a proposed initiative that would consolidate Electrification (Driving the Electric Revolution, DER) activities of the Power Networks Demonstration Centre (PNDC) and the work of the Lightweight Manufacturing Centre (LMC) within the current Rolls-Royce facility at Inchinnan, which the University would sub-lease, drawing on and maximising the impact of major grants in relevant areas. The project would yield the co-location of capabilities that supported the design, manufacture, integration and testing of decarbonisation products, giving Strathclyde a unique position in supporting integrated solutions to major global challenges.

In discussion with Court members, it was noted that PNDC would continue to be based in Cumbernauld. Those activities that were due to be developed within MERLIN were above and beyond the capacities of the Cumbernauld facility. It was also noted that Rolls-Royce and the landlord of the Inchinnan site were highly supportive of the project. Members noted that the strong track record of income generation at the relevant facilities gave confidence in the income projections in the paper. It was noted that Estates Committee would be consulted appropriately on any future developments or opportunities at the level of design.

Court **approved** the project, including capital investment of up to **[RESERVED]** for refurbishment of the Inchinnan facility.

6. TIC Zone update

The CFO and CCO presented an update on the development of the TIC Zone in the Glasgow City Innovation District (GCID), noting that this was a key driver of regeneration in the central east-end of Glasgow and that its importance had increased still further since the Covid-19 pandemic. Proposals for the further development of the TIC Zone had been adapted to take account of this and other changes in the wider context. The proposals had four main strands:

- **Construction of TIC East:** In line with previous presentations to Court, the TIC East building would be the first constructed. Discussions continued with stakeholders to finalise funding arrangements.
- **Development of the old Students' Union building:** The Student Union's move to the Learning & Teaching Building had created an opportunity to re-envision the vacated building as a digital, social and entrepreneurial hub within a sustainable setting. A feasibility study was to be carried out.
- **Enabling Ambitious Growth of the Quantum Cluster:** The Quantum Cluster's specialist facilities that could not be delivered within TIC East or the old USSA building for structural reasons. Options were being explored in other spaces and a feasibility study was to be carried out for the leading proposal.
- **TIC West:** Development of the proposed TIC West building through commercial developers was being explored as potentially an appropriate approach in the current context.

In discussion, members noted that Strathclyde's Quantum Cluster was distinctive while also complementing other centres of quantum research and innovation globally. Its further development would create the capacity and infrastructure required to enhance this role. Members discussed and received reassurances on legal safeguards in potential relationships with commercial partners. It was noted that the planned feasibility studies would be holistic, not only centred on building design.

Court **noted** the update.

7. University of Strathclyde Student's Association (USSA) Audited Accounts 2020-21 and Update Articles of Association

The Chief Executive and the President of USSA presented the student association's annual accounts for the previous financial year, in compliance with statutory requirements to make the accounts available to Court.

It was noted that both income and expenditure had been affected by the pandemic. The accounts showed an overall surplus and the organisation's cash position was strong. USSA continued to work with the University on management of its pension liabilities. The CFO commended the accounts and noted that they reflected good stewardship of the Association in a difficult context. Future prospects for its commercial operations were positive. Members discussed the opportunities created by relocation to the Learning & Teaching Building and were given a brief update on on-going snagging work on the building.

USSA's revised Articles of Association were also presented. It was noted that these had been approved by a general meeting of USSA and that Court's approval was required by legislation.

Court **noted** the accounts and **approved** the Articles of Association.

8. [Reserved item]

Items for formal approval

9. Supporting CMAC Growth and Strategic Expansion via Extension of National Facility

Court **approved** the business case for the strategic expansion of CMAC.

10. Amendments to the Regulations: Committee compositions

Court **approved** the proposed amendments to the Regulations.

Committee Reports

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

11. Executive Team

12. Senate

Court **approved** the following new awards for inclusion in the Ordinances:

- Professional Doctorate
- Graduate Certificate
- Open Studies Certificate

13. Court Business Group

14. Court Membership Group

Court **approved** the appointment of Fiona Salzen as a lay member of Court.

15. Audit & Risk Committee

16. Enterprise and Investment Committee

17. Estates Committee

18. Remuneration Committee

19. AOB

Steering Committee for Quinquennial Court Effectiveness Review

Court **delegated authority** to the Convener to establish a steering committee for the 'externally facilitated evaluation of [Court's] own effectiveness and that of its committees' which was due to be held in 2022, in line with the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

Date of next meeting

- 16 June 2022

DW, 6 May 2022