

General Council Half Yearly Meeting 22nd January 2018

Minute of General Council Half Yearly Meeting held 22 January 2018, Imaging Centre of Excellence,
Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow

Item

1 Introduction and Welcome

The Principal Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli welcomed everyone and thanked those present for attending the meeting. He introduced the panel – Amber Higgins, Clerk to the General Council (GC), and John Marsh, Convenor of the General Council Business Committee (GCBC). The Principal reported that the Chancellor, Sir Kenneth Calman was unable to make the meeting.

2 Minutes of meeting of 12th June 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2017 were approved.

3 Election of Members to serve on General Council Business Committee

It was reported that one member of the GCBC who's first term of office was due to expire, had intimated that they wished to stand again for another four year term of office until January 2022. They were as follows:

Gerry Law BA(Ord) 1980

4 Report of Convenor of the General Council Business Committee

Convenor, John Marsh, thanked the Principal for his introduction and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Convenor reported that there had been 2 meeting of the GCBC since the last Half Yearly Meeting. The meeting was informed about the work of the Academic Standards Committee and the matters noted by the GCBC were the proposals for the Teaching Excellence Framework. It was noted that the University continued to make good progress in the University Rankings and had been named Scottish University of the Year by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018.

The GCBC continued to be informed about the capital works programme which was making good progress, with the campus starting to change shape with the demolition of the Maths and Stats building. The GCBC had been pleased to note the extension of the Principals appointment until 2024 as this would provide stability for the University during the capital programme. The Convenor also reported that alumni engagement was strong and that a large number of events had taken place both nationally and internationally. The GC also noted the progress that was being made on The Network with around 6977 members. The Network was the online networking platform which helps students and recent graduates to find a mentor or advice from an alumni.

The Convenor also reported that the changes to the University of Glasgow Trust had been put into place following discussion at the last meeting. The GCBC continued to have representation on the Academic Standards Committee, Avenue Editorial Board, and Young Alumnus of the Year. It was also noted that the GCBC had agreed to changes to the General Council and that a series of email communications would now be sent out to recent graduates instead of a one off letter, it was hoped that this would increase engagement with recent graduates.

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The Convener reported that Cathy Bell had retired and that Fran Shepherd had taken over as the Director of the Development and Alumni Office. It was also reported that meetings had taken place with Rachel Sandison, Director of External Relations following the restructuring of University Services.

The Convener reported that the GCBC continued to work on ways to engage more fully with GC members and the University. It was hoped that a number of presentations would help members to have a greater understanding of the wider university and how GC members can engage with the University.

The GCBC has approved Draft Resolution 677 – Board of Catholic Education which amended the membership, remit and responsibilities to reflect changes in the University structures and nomenclature.

The Convener invited all members to get in touch with Clerk as there were a number of ways that alumni could help the university, students and recent graduates.

The Principal thanked the Convenor for his report and thanked all the GCBC members for all their hard work on behalf of the General Council. It was noted that no questions were raised and thanked John for his presentation.

5 Principal's Address and Questions

As outlined early the Principal reported that the University continued to make progress in the UK and World League Tables and had been named Scottish University of the Year. In the National Student Survey the University had been overall rated joint 1st in the Russell Group. 19 subjects had been in the top 10 for the UK and 3 had been at number 1. It was also reported that student numbers were increasing for UG and PG student intake. Graduations had also taken place at the University's campus in China at Nankai and UESTC.

The Principal was also pleased to announce that the first Teaching Excellence Summit for Times Higher Education would take place in partnership with the University. Around 1027 institutions and companies from 137 countries. 49% of those in attendance would be CEO, Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

The university had an operating surplus of £32m last financial year and the University's research order book has been the highest ever with it currently sitting at £345m and that the University had also been successful with the Global Challenges Research Fund. The University had also received The Queen's Anniversary Prizes for the Thesaurus.

The Principal reported that the campus development was progressing and outlined the plans for the Learning and Teaching Hub which would help improve the student experience. The L&T Hub foundations were currently being built and the building was due to open in late 2019. Court had also recently approved the business case for the Research Hub and once the initial work had taken place on the Western site the work would then commence on this.

The Principal reported to the General Council that BREXIT continued to be a key focus of the SMG team and that challenges lay ahead but emphasised just how much this University values EU staff and student contribution to the University community and that they were a vital and essential part of our University.

GC members commented on the positive report by the Principal and were delighted that the University continued to go from strength to strength under the guidance of the Principal. Questions were raised about the historic buildings in the development site and around the university and the impact on these from the development. It was reported that there were 5 historic buildings on which would all be incorporated into any new build.

A GC member asked about the use of IP, licensing and spin off companies. It was reported that the university was working on this area to improve success rates but that the university wanted to make sure that it was not spread over too many areas and that critical mass was important.

The Principal drew this section to a close.

Item

6 Draft Ordinances – Election of Chancellor and General Council Assessors on Court

The Clerk to the General Council reported that currently three different Ordinances covered the elections of the Chancellor and GC Assessors on Court, which can make it very difficult to understand the processes. The current ordinances contain the need for a purely postal vote and outlines the voting papers which must be used. The three existing Ordinances would be withdrawn and replaced by one Ordinance. The new Ordinance would be stripped back and only outline the terms of office for both positions, who is eligible to stand, and who is responsible for approving the regulations to run the elections. The new Regulations would contain the detail for the running of the elections and the procedures and processes for doing this, including the provision for e-elections. The Regulations could then easily be updated to reflect any changes in the future by the General Council Business Committee and Court Office rather than the need to go to the Privy Council. The General Council body had changed significantly over the years and this streamlined procedure would allow more members to vote in elections and bring the University in line with other Ancient Universities.

Key changes -

1. The primary aim would be to allow e-elections (rather than paper) as the main method of election and to have the detailed processes in local regulations, rather than in an Ordinance that would require Privy Council approval for any changes in the future.
2. The main sections that were removed from the current Ordinances and put into regulations would be
 - Notices of about nominations process
 - Rules about nominations
 - Rules about withdrawals
 - Timescales and instructions relating to voting
 - Requests for voting papers permitted
 - Voting system to be used (STV)
 - Provision for personal statements from candidates
 - Publication of results by University
3. Sections to be removed from both:
 - Very detailed required formats for paperwork such as nominations form, consent form, voting paper.
 - Detailed requirements about timescales and processes relating to postal voting
 - Detailed requirements about exact location of results publication

The Clerk reported that the Draft Ordinance had been submitted to the Scottish Government and the University was waiting for approval to go to public consultation. The GC raised no concerns over the new draft Ordinances in relation to the elections of the Chancellor or GC Assessors on Court.

7 AOCB

The Principal thanked all those present and informed the meeting that the next meeting would take place in June 2018 with further details available on the General Council Webpages.

The Principal closed the meeting by thanking all present for their attendance and invited Professor Dame Anna Dominiczak, Vice-Principal and Head of College for Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences to address the members.