

University of Glasgow
General Council
Half-yearly Meeting (By Zoom)
27 June 2022

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chancellor opened the meeting and welcomed all to the first General Council Half Yearly meeting of 2022.

She observed that the Half Yearly was taking place very close to the summer graduations and was pleased to have officiated at several recent ceremonies in the Bute Hall.

She advised General Council that the meeting agenda consisted of 3 main reports - these being from the Principal, Convener of Court, and Convener of the General Council Business Committee.

2. Principal's Address

The Principal introduced his report by advising members that despite the many challenges of the preceding year the University was in a strong position having achieved a great deal in this period. He highlighted some areas of particular note:

- In the global rankings produced by the 2 main ranking bodies (QS and the Times Higher Education (THE) - the University was ranked in the top 100. For a number of years, however, the THE had also produced an alternative way of ranking Universities, which involved looking at their contribution to UN sustainable development goals. The University had traditionally not entered into these rankings, but this year had decided to do so given the current focus on climate change and sustainable development goals. The University also wanted to benchmark itself against its peers in this area. The University was subsequently ranked 19th in the world; 3rd in the UK and 1st in Scotland;
- The University had launched the Scottish Council on Global Affairs with St Andrews and Edinburgh Universities – this being a non-political, non-aligned hub for research and policy on international relations and global politics - supported by the Scottish Government, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office;
- Working with the University of Edinburgh, the University had opened the third IntoUniversity Centre in Maryhill – previous Centres having been opened in Craigmillar in Edinburgh, and Govan;
- As part of its commitment to race equality, the University had launched 17 new James McCune Smith PhD scholarships for black students;
- The University had appointed Professor Jo Gill to the position of Vice-Principal and Head of the College of Arts - in succession to Professor Robby O'Maolalaigh; and appointed Ms Uzma Khan to the position of Deputy Chief Operating Officer and Vice-Principal (Economic Development and Innovation). The deputising structure for the Principal was now: Professor Frank Coton, Senior Vice-Principal, Strategy and Resources, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Miss Rachel Sandison, Vice-Principal, External Engagement, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and Dr David Duncan, Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Professor Neal Juster, formerly Senior Vice-Principal, and Deputy

Vice-Chancellor, had left the University to take up the post of Vice-Principal at the University of Lincoln, and Ms Bonnie Dean formerly Vice-Principal, Corporate Engagement and Innovation, had retired;

- 10 University staff had been appointed as new Fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh;
- The University had launched several new strategies which included its new international strategy: Global Glasgow 2025;
- The University had also secured significant research funding, including: in respect of a new £12m Glasgow-Edinburgh Cancer Research UK Scotland Centre; and a £10m UKRI Natural Environment Research Council award for GALLANT – a large-scale research programme to create and develop sustainable solutions.

Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021)

The Principal was pleased to report that the University had, for the second REF in a row, achieved an excellent set of results overall. The University had made 28 submissions to 27 subject panels; 1445 staff (1375 FTEs) had submitted with 3,300 outputs and 118 Impact Case Studies. Under REF, every subject area in every university in the UK was assessed for research quality. The University’s performance had been assessed as world-leading (4* - 50.6%) or internationally excellent (3* - 42.5%): being 93.1% overall, in terms of research that was world-leading or internationally excellent. The breakdown of REF results, in terms of Grade Point Average (GPA) was:

	Overall GPA	Outputs GPA	Impact GPA	Environment GPA
Glasgow	3.43	3.39	3.57	3.46
UK Average	3.24	3.17	3.35	3.34

The University was ranked 13th in the UK - up from 25th in 2014 and 33rd in 2008; 10th in the Russell Group - up from 18th in 2014; and 1st in Scotland. The Principal noted that the results showed the excellent progress the University had made against previous REFs and that it had moved up 21 places in rank position since 2008.

Investments

The Principal provided the following figures with respect to investments:

Committed/Completed Expenditure on Capital Projects (£m)	
James McCune Smith Learning Hub	99.9
Mathematics & Statistics Building	8.7
Advanced Research Centre	116.5
Clarice Pears Building	50.9
Adam Smith Business School & PGT Hub	94
Infrastructure	77.3
PDMS	22.6
Innovation Zone/Church Street	3.5

Next Phase (in progress/commencing - £m)	
Multi-use Building	154.4
Boyd Orr Building	117.5
Meanwhile Masterplan	6.8
Biological Services	14

IT Major Projects: £307m

Equipment Capital Plan: £96m

(over budget period)

To allow the University to grow its learning and teaching capability it was necessary to consolidate its facilities, and the Principal noted the following campus building developments over the preceding year:

- The James McCune Smith Building was now open;
- The Advanced Research Centre (ARC) had just been opened;
- The Clarice Pears Building would open in 2023;
- The Adam Smith Business School and PGT Hub would be open by September 2023;
- The new Civic Square on the site of the old Western Infirmary was progressing well;
- It was hoped to develop, in a joint venture with private developers, an innovation space, student residences and perhaps hotel accommodation on the Innovation Zone/Church St site.

The next phase of development would include work to develop a multi-use building (which would include upgraded teaching labs, and space for the School of Engineering to replace outdated accommodation in the Rankine Building; work on the Boyd Orr Building; the Meanwhile Masterplan and the provision of space for Biological Services. The Meanwhile Masterplan included vacant sites on which no building was currently planned but which required some investment to ensure compliance with planning regulations.

Also, there would be substantial investment in IT to support upgrading of some of the University's IT infrastructure - including administrative and research IT platforms.

The University's turnover in the last reporting year was £813m, as against £688m in 2019 and £608 in 2017. Session 2021-22 had had larger than usual recruitment figures having had a dual intake – in September and January – which brought about an inflated figure for current turnover. The University had a healthy operating surplus for the next phase of development – in both teaching and research.

Regarding future figures, both Court and the Finance Committee had worked on long-term cash flow projections (20-30 years), stress-testing against a range of different scenarios.

Current Challenges and Effect of External Context on the University

The Principal drew members' attention to some of the challenges facing the University and the impact of external events. This included:

- There had been some travel disruption for international students;
- Face to face teaching had resumed but online learning had continued where students had found it most effective and the University was trying to retain the benefits gained during the pandemic;
- The energy and cost of living crisis was impacting on students and colleagues and the University was continuing to explore ways by which it could support students – eg extending the use of student hardship funds.

Ukraine

- There were 45 Ukrainian and 73 Russian students and 6 from Belarus registered at the University and additional hardship support was being made available to them;
- A sub-group convened by Miss Rachel Sandison, Vice-Principal, and supported by colleagues from Central and East European Studies, met weekly to consider matters linked to the war in Ukraine;
- It was hoped to bring up to 100 Ukrainian students, across 2 semesters, to the campus next year and the University was supporting a group of 20 medical students;
- Donation hubs had been set up across the campus and around 800 boxes of aid had been sent to Ukraine and Poland;
- The University was supporting CARA (Council for at-Risk Academics); and
- The University had been twinned with 3 universities in Ukraine, including Kyiv-Mohyla University.

In concluding his report the Principal referred to slides showing how the campus development programme was progressing along with expected completion dates for the new buildings. This included the recent ceremony to mark the opening of the new Advanced Research Centre (ARC), performed by Professor Sir David Macmillan, University of Glasgow alumnus and Chemistry Nobel Prize winner. Sir David had also been awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science from the University at a recent graduation ceremony.

A member asked a question regarding the extent to which the University was capitalising on the good work it was doing for the economic benefit of the Scottish economy. The Principal observed that much work was being done in this area and referred members to a report written by London Economics (a global, economic, financial and strategic advisory professional services firm) and published by the University last year, which outlined the wider social and economic impact of the University. The report showed that the University generated about £4.4 billion of economic output.

The Scottish Government had just launched the National Strategy for Economic Transformation – setting out the priorities for the Scottish economy over the next decade, and Ms Khan, Vice-Principal, Economic Development and Innovation was leading for the University on work related to this initiative. The Principal observed that he saw a role for the University in the broader discussion on economic and social matters, such as: housing stock; decarbonisation; urban studies; migration and refugees.

In addition, there were many ways in which General Council members had a role to play as ambassadors for the University in helping to link the University up with a range of organisations. He stressed that the University had a wide economic and social mission and was a key civic actor in Scottish society.

The Chancellor thanked the Principal for his very comprehensive and wide-ranging report.

3. Convener of Court Address

University of Glasgow Court

Ms Elizabeth Passey, Convener of Court introduced her report by advising that she would outline for the General Council the main responsibilities and functions of the University Court.

Court had been created by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858, a development which gave Court the power to control/review activities of Senate regarding property and revenues – Senate having been

developed through the 17th and 18th centuries through the expansion of teaching. Further revisions to Court took place via the passing of Universities (Scotland) Acts, in 1889 and 1966.

A Modern Court

Ms Passey advised Council that, over time, Court had evolved into a modern body with oversight in areas such as:

- People and Organisational Development
- Financial Resources
- The Estate
- Strategic Direction and Strategic Plan
- Reputation and Values
- The Student Experience (and Senate/SRC)
- Performance Monitoring; and
- Compliance with Statutory Responsibilities

Court Committees

Court Committees included those in relation to: Finance; People and Organisational Development; Audit and Risk; Health Safety and Wellbeing; Nominations; Remuneration; Student Experience (jointly with Senate); Estates; and Information Policy and Strategy.

Governance and Management

Ms Passey noted that Court played a key role in governance and management ensuring that the University was run effectively. Court's membership in 2022 consisted of 25 members (as below), the majority of whom were lay (non-staff, non-student) members:

- 9 Co-opted members (including the Convener of Court)
- Rector
- Chancellor's Assessor
- Glasgow City Council Assessor
- 2 General Council (UoG graduate) Assessors
- Principal
- 5 Elected Academic Staff members
- 2 Trade Union Representatives
- Elected Professional Services Representative
- President of Students' Representative Council (SRC)
- SRC Assessor

Court's Links with Communities

Ms Passey drew Council's attention to the ways in which Court linked into the various University communities. This included engagement with the following stakeholders/events:

- Students and Staff: via liaison with Committees e.g. Student Experience, Student Finance, P&OD, Joint Union Liaison, Equality and Diversity; and Estates (e.g. in relation to specification for new buildings)

- Students' Representative Council (SRC) – (including its annual briefing to Court) and the Rector
- Updates to Court on relevant matters e.g. international students, mental health action plan
- Senate (academic body - teaching and research) via communications to/from Court
- This event - (ie with the General Council)
- University open events – including estates development

Court Business This Session

- Continuing recovery from Covid
- Campus Development and review of the capital plan
- Approvals of annual budget and financial statements
- New Strategic Plan and Key Performance Indicators
- Student Experience Strategy
- Briefings on Information and Technology Policy and Strategy; Learning and Teaching Strategy; and Research Strategy
- REF Results 2021
- Sustainability; Glasgow Green Strategy
- Work regarding staff and student-related matters e.g. Health and Safety; Brexit; mental health; working from home; online learning
- Approval of annual report to Scottish Funding Council, on academic standards and quality; and
- Approval of Outcome Agreement, indicating what the University delivers for Government funding
- Annual Strategy Day

Conduct of Court Business

Ms Passey advised Council that the business of Court required to be conducted in line with certain requirements. This included:

- The Scottish Code of Good HE Governance – this set out the high-level principles of good governance along with more detailed provisions
- The Statement of Primary Responsibilities, which required that appropriate mechanisms were in place for a wide range of matters for which Court was ultimately responsible, including – revenue/finances and property; people; responsiveness to stakeholders (students, staff, alumni, community, funders); reputation; and compliance
- Standing Orders – with regard to conduct of meetings and ethical standards in public life; and
- Recruitment of members

Court Meetings

Current and future business would include:

- Briefings on areas of strategic importance e.g. finances, student recruitment, capital project, heritage of the University and buildings.

Main meeting agenda items would include:

- Report and KPIs in key strategic areas e.g. research
- Report from the Principal e.g. in relation to the Covid impact & recovery, HE developments, and Senior Management Group (SMG) business
- Report from Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary e.g. in relation to governance, high level operational matters, Scottish Government briefings on Covid
- Court Committee reports including strategic matters for Court decisions e.g. estates, finance, P&OD, student experience, audit and risk, remuneration, health, safety and wellbeing
- Communications from Council of Senate
- Annual reports e.g. from Audit & Risk Committee, SRC; Outcome Agreement with Scottish Funding Council and
- Annual strategy day; induction and training.

The Chancellor thanked Ms Passey for her very thorough and comprehensive report.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council Half Yearly Held on 21 June 2021

The Chancellor observed that as today's meeting was not quorate, the General Council was not in a position to formally approve the minutes of the last meeting. However, the General Council **agreed to endorse** the minutes of the General Council Half Yearly meeting held on 21 June 2021.

The minutes of the last meeting would be approved at the next General Council Half Yearly meeting, to be held on 31 January 2023.

5. Matters Arising (and not otherwise on the agenda)

There were no matters arising.

6. Election of General Council Asssors to the University Court: Ratification of Results

The Chancellor observed that as today's meeting was not quorate, the General Council was not in a position to formally ratify the results of the election of General Council Assessors to the University Court.

However, the General Council **agreed to endorse** the results of the election of General Council Assessors to the University Court, as below. The results would be ratified at the next General Council Half Yearly meeting to be held on 31 January 2023.

The successful candidates were:

Stuart Hoggan
Christine Middlemiss

7. Report from the Convener of the General Council Business Committee

Rev Stuart MacQuarrie, Convener of the General Council Business Committee (GCBC) introduced his remarks by noting that throughout the preceding year the General Council Business Committee had

welcomed a series of speakers to the committee to talk on a range of subjects. His report summarised the issues that the speakers had reported on during that period.

He thanked Morag Macdonald Simpson and Lesley Sutherland whose term of office on the GCBC and as General Council Assessors on Court had come to an end, for all the work they had undertaken in both roles. He also thanked Professor Jill Morrison, Clerk of Senate who was retiring from the University for the invaluable support and advice that she had provided to both staff and students over many years.

He congratulated Stuart Hoggan and Christine Middlemiss on their appointment as General Council Assessors on Court, and also Florence Glanfield on her appointment to the General Council Business Committee.

Rev MacQuarrie noted that the timetable of forthcoming meetings of the GCBC and the General Council Half Yearly had been restructured so as to align with meetings of Court (please see agenda for details). The intention was that General Council meetings would follow shortly after meetings of Court to enable members to follow up/discuss any items of Court business should they so wish.

Given the very large number of University of Glasgow alumni (approximately 240,000), it was likely that future General Council meetings would take place by Zoom - or in a hybrid fashion.

He noted that a member of the GCBC had requested that the committee discuss the matter of sport at the University, so the next meeting of the GCBC would include this as a main item on the agenda.

The Chancellor thanked Rev MacQuarrie for his informative report.

8. Close of Meeting

In closing the meeting, the Chancellor thanked all for participating and in particular those who had presented very interesting and thorough reports.

The Chancellor added her best wishes to Professor Morrison on her upcoming retirement. She was pleased that the recent graduations had gone so well and was delighted to note that for the first time in the University's history, the platform party at a graduation ceremony had been all-female – namely the Chancellor (Presiding Officer), Professor Morrison (Clerk of Senate) and Reverend Dr Carolyn Kelly, Chaplain to the University.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next General Council Half Yearly meeting will take place on 31 January 2023.