

**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2018**

**Present:** Ms F Sandford (Chair), Mr H Adam, Mr J Dick, Prof J Donaldson, Mr J Grant, Prof A Green, Mr H Grossart, Prof M MacLeod, Ms L Marr, Prof G McCormac, Ms C Morrison, Prof H Nehring, Rev M Roderick, Councillor C Simpson, Ms A Smallenbroek, Mr A Sturgess

**In Attendance:** Ms C Gallagher, Mr G MacLeod, Mr L McCabe, Mr M McCrindle, Mr C McNally, Ms J Morrow, Prof J Phillips, Dr J Rogers, Ms E Schofield, Prof L Sparks, Mr L Spillane, Prof N Wylie, Ms F Wheater (Clerk)

**Apologies:** Mr S Anderson, Mr S Haldane, Ms B McKissack

Members noted that Kate Howie’s membership on Court came to an end on 31st July 2018. Kate was thanked for her contributions to Court.

Professor Neville Wylie, Deputy Principal (Internationalisation), was welcomed to his first meeting of Court as an attendee.

**1. PERFORMANCE OF CHAIR OF COURT**

The Vice-Chair of Court led a discussion with the members of Court on the performance of the Chair of Court in accordance with the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance requirements. The Chair and attendees were not present for this discussion.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES UC(17/18) Minutes 4**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2018 were **approved** as an accurate record.

**4. MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA**

**(i) Scion House (Min 6, Jun 2018)**

An oral update was provided in relation to the acquisition of Scion House. The purchase of Scion House and Wallace View were a critical part of the institutional economic development as set out in the Stirling City Deal. The transfer of ownership to the University would enable revenues generated from the property to be re-invested in a programme of commercialisation including the development of the new Institute of Aquaculture and Food Security, the Scottish Environment Centre and a student and graduate enterprise programme. In addition to funding from the City Deal, discussions were underway to secure further support from other sources. Work would continue within the Research & Innovation Services team to develop full business cases for the release of funds.

Court **noted** the update on Scion House.

**5. REMIT, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP UC(18/19)1**

Court **noted** the current remit, composition and membership of Court for 2018/19.

**6. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT UC(18/19)2**

Court received a report on recent developments in the external environment and their potential impact upon the higher education sector. It was noted that the Joint Expert Panel (JEP) that had been created to assess the valuation of the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) had reported. The Panel recommendation to seek a revised Scheme valuation, with new assumptions, were currently under consideration and would require USS Trustees and Pensions Regulator approval.

The UK Government’s Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) had recently reported on the impact of international students on the UK. The report had recommended that international students should not be removed from the net migration statistics and did not propose introducing separate post-study work visas which was disappointing for the sector.

The University had risen one place in the Sunday Times University Guide rising from 45th in the UK to 44th and also rising one place in Scotland to 7th place.

Court **noted** the update on the external environment.

***DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN***

**7. CITY DEAL UC(18/19)3**

Court received an update on the governance and management arrangements for the City Deal projects. The Heads of Terms (HoTs) had been signed by the UK and Scottish Governments, Clackmannanshire Council, Stirling Council and the University. The UK government was committed to providing £22m capital funding to the University for the new Institute of Aquaculture and the Research & Policy Centre of Scotland’s International Environment Centre. The University was also lead partner for the proposed intergenerational community which had not yet received resources. All projects were at an advanced concept stage. The next stage would be to produce detailed business cases and work to leverage additional funding.

The University had established a Programme Board with overall responsibility for oversight of the delivery of the programme and was also putting in place project teams for each of the three City Deal projects.

As with any large scale project members noted that there were risks involved with participating in the project.

Court **noted** the update on the City Deal.

**8. PERFORMANCE REPORT UC(17/18)4**

Court considered the annual Performance Report which built on the quarterly reports on key performance indicators and provided a reflective analysis of the year and a forward look. Key success indicators included:

* Institutional income had increased for the third year in succession. Research income, commercial income, off-campus fee income and enterprise income also increased.
* 97.1% of graduates were in a ‘positive destination’ six-months after graduation in the DLHE 2016/17; 79.2% of graduates had secured graduate-level jobs.
* Postgraduate research students reported improved satisfaction in 7 out 9 survey question sections, with top quartile scores in 4 sections.
* The University was in the top quartile for tariff on entry when compared with the UK sector.
* In 2017/18, the University had achieved its largest ever cohort of rest of the UK (RUK) students and exceeded the target for home and EU postgraduate taught students.
* Postgraduate taught overseas student numbers had increased.
* Home/EU Postgraduate research student numbers had increased.

It was noted that the methodology for collecting employability and destinations data would be changing away from a self-reporting system and that this could result in a rebasing of sector wide data.

Court **noted** the report on the University’s performance in 2017/18.

**9. STUDENT INTAKE AND POPULATION PLANNING UC(18/19)5**

Court received a report on student intake and population planning. The September intake was forecast to demonstrate growth in the overseas undergraduate and home postgraduate taught population. Recruitment of Rest of UK students had been challenging with projected figures being below both the ambitious target and budgeted target, however the total number of RUK students was still the highest that the University had ever recorded and this was in a very competitive market.

An early forecast of tuition fee income was predicting that income would broadly be in line with the budgeted target, subject to enrolment and retention of the indicative student numbers.

Court **noted** the update on student intake and population planning.

**10. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS UC(18/19)6**

Court received a report on the fourth-quarter Management Accounts to 31 July 2018. It was noted that there would be some year-end adjustments to the accounts before final out-turn for 2017/18 was presented to Court in the audited financial statements. The key headlines were:

* The full year out-turn generated a positive cash inflow of £ 5.2 million from revenue operations.
* The revenue out-turn for the full year was a deficit of £2.1 million, which represented a favourable variance of £1.2 million in Q4 and a favourable variance of £1.6 million against the approved budget.
* Total University income was £120.6 million, an increase of £3.8 million (3.2%) on the prior year.
* Tuition fee income was £3.8 million (12%) higher than the prior year, which represented a favourable variance of £270k when compared to the forecast but a shortfall against the approved budget of £890k.
* Total University expenditure was £122 million, an increase of £5.5 million (5%) on the prior year.

It was noted that the University would be covenant compliant for 2017-18.

Court **noted** the Management Accounts, including the preliminary financial out-turn and the measurement and assessment of the financial performance against budget, for the year ending 31 July 2018.

***GOVERNANCE***

**11. CHARTER & STATUTES UC(18/19)7**

Court considered the proposed changes to the Charter and Statutes. The changes were required to comply with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. The main changes related to the composition of Court and the definition of academic freedom. In addition there were some proposed changes that would bring the Charter & Statutes more up to date, meet the University’s current needs and comply with other legal requirements.

The University Secretary had recently met with representatives from the Scottish Government and the next stage in the process would be to enter into discussions with both the Scottish Government and the Privy Council about the proposed changes.

The final proposals would come back to Court in due course to make a special resolution before formal submission to the Privy Council.

Court **approved** the proposed changes **in principle** and **delegated authority** to the Governance and Nominations committee to make any further amendments required before submission to the Scottish Government for initial discussions.

***ACTIVITY UPDATES***

**12. STUDENTS’ UNION UPDATE UC(18/19)8**

Court considered a report from the Students’ Union on recent activity. Prior to the Court meeting, members of Court had attended the launch of the Students’ Union Strategic Plan 2018-2021 which highlighted 5 priorities:

* Representing the views of students to the University and beyond.
* Enhancing the Student Experience through campaigning for positive change and social justice.
* Empowering students to develop their resilience and wellbeing through participation in co-curricular activities.
* Facilitating students to positively engage in environmental, ethical and sustainability issues.
* Providing secure and attractive spaces for students to study, socialise and relax.

Other items covered in the report included a recently held ‘Brexit Brunch’ and success of the Green and Blue space that had helped reduce carbon dioxide emissions by recycling and reusing items.

Court **noted** the Students’ Union update.

**13. STAFF AND EMPLOYMENT UPDATE UC(18/19)9**

Court received an update on staff and employment matters. The current status of the discussions regarding the valuation and contributions to the USS pension scheme had been discussed under item 6.

The national pay negotiations had resulted in a final offer of an annual pay rise of 2% or £425 whichever was higher, from 1 August 2018. Some trade unions had not accepted the offer and were balloting their members to seek support for industrial action.

HR & Organisation Development were pleased to have been nominated for a Times Higher Education Award for Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development relating to their Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Programmes.

Court **noted** the update on staff and employment matters.

***COMMITTEE REPORTS***

**14. ACADEMIC COUNCIL UC(18/19)10**

Court received an update from Academic Council from the meeting of 12 September 2018. The report included items on student surveys and committee updates.

Court **approved** the annual report on Institutional-led Review (see item 17 below) and **noted** the other items in the report from Academic Council.

**15. ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**(i) University Court UC(18/19)11(i)**

Court **noted** the annual reflective report from Court for 2017/18 which summarised the main items of business considered during the year within the context of the remit of Court and the guidelines in the Scottish Code for Good HE Governance.

**(ii) Joint Policy, Planning & Resources Committee UC(18/19)11(ii)**

Court received the annual reflective report from JPPRC for 2017/18. The report summarised some of the main items of business considered during the year and concluded that the committee has fulfilled its remit for the year and actively engaged with the business.

Court **noted** the annual report from JPPRC.

 **(iii) Research Ethics Committee UC(18/19)11(iii)**

Court received the annual report from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). The report detailed the key activities of the Committee during the year 2017/18 and matters that the Committee had considered. Court thanked the three lay chairs of the Ethics Panels and the chair of UREC for all the work they had done during the year.

Court **noted** the annual report from the University Research Ethics Committee.

**16. GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE UC(18/19)12**

Court considered the report from the inaugural meeting of the Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC). Court noted the recent committee appointments, **approved** the revised remit of GNC and **approved** the amendments to Ordinance 62, subject to endorsement by Academic Council at their next meeting.

***OTHER ITEMS***

**17. INSTITUTION-LED REVIEW OF QUALITY 2017/18 UC(18/19)13**

Court received and **approved** the annual statement on quality for the Scottish Funding Council.

**18. LLOYDS REVOLVING CREDIT FACILITY AMENDMENT UC(18/19)14**

Court **approved** the amendment to the loan facility in place with Lloyds regarding the level of permissible net debt and **authorised** the Director of Finance to sign the amendment letter on behalf of the University.

***RISKS***

**19. RISKS ARISING**

Court **noted** the risks relating to the City Deal and agreed these should be reflected on theregister of strategic risk.

**20. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

 Court received a brief update on ongoing infrastructure projects.

* Sports Centre - a value engineering exercise had been undertaken and demolition was due to commence in October/November 2018. The building work would have to take into account changes to building regulations.
* Campus Central/Transport Hub - The Transport hub was due to open on 7th October following re-tarmacking of the road surface. A temporary reception would be put in place near the mail room prior to developing a more permanent reception facility at that entrance. Work would be starting on other aspects of Campus Central in December 2018/January 2019 and every effort would be made to minimise disruptions to students.
* Other - various other work was ongoing such as replacing the water mains and roofing work.

Court **noted** the update on infrastructure projects.

**21. NEXT MEETING**

Court **noted** that there would be a Court Strategy day on Friday 26 October 2018 (preceded by dinner on 25 October) and the next full meeting of Court was scheduled for 10 December 2018.

Policy & Planning

September 2018