

**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2022**

**Present:** Dr M Allison, Dr P Cowell, Ms P Crawford, Prof J Donaldson, Mr K Fraser, Ms S Gordon (Chair), Mr H Grossart, Prof P Hancock, Mr G Hastie, Mr D Kearney, Ms A MacKay, Mr G MacLeod, Prof M MacLeod, Prof G McCormac, Ms B McKissack, Prof H Nehring and Councillor C Simpson.

**In Attendance:** Mr G Duff, Ms C Gallagher, Ms J Harrison, Ms K Lawson, Mr L McCabe, Mr C McNally, Ms J Morrow, Prof J Phillips, Dr J Rogers, Ms E Schofield, Prof L Sparks, Mr L Spillane, Dr David Telford, Mr M Nichol (Clerk), Prof N Wylie and Dr L Zhuang.

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Mr H Adam, Ms N Cadinanos Gonzalez, Ms C Morrison and Rev M Roderick.

**Welcome**: The Chair offered her condolences to the family of Robert G Bomont who died peacefully on 28 January 2022. Robert was a former Secretary of the University from March 1973 until his retirement in August 1995.

The Chair thanked Nela Cadinanos Gonzalez (Students’ Union President) and Alyson MacKay (Students’ Union Vice President Communities) for their contribution to University Court, the incoming sabbatical officers would start from the beginning of June.

The Chair thanked George MacLeod and Councillor Christine Simpson for their contribution to University Court. George was retiring in May and Christine was not standing for re-election at the Scottish local government elections.

**\*1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES UC(21/22) Minutes 2**

Court **approved** the minutes of the meetings held on 13 December 2021.

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

There were no matters arising as actions had been completed and reported elsewhere or were underway.

**\*4. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT UC(21/22)34**

Court received an overview of the paper on recent developments in the External Environment. This included coverage of:

* Ukraine Conflict
* Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics
* Scottish Government Budget 2022/23
* Audit Scotland Report: Planning for Skills

Members discussed in particular the conflict in Ukraine and the type of support that would be most appropriate to meet the needs of the Ukrainian people.

Court **noted** the recent developments in the external environment.

***PLANNING AND BUDGETING***

**\*5. INTEGRATED PLANNING AND BUDGETING UC(21/22)35**

Court received an update on Integrated Planning and Budgeting at Quarter 2.

It was confirmed that, based on the Quarter 2 management accounts out-turn surplus and progress with the capital plan, the University was forecast to end financial year 2021-22 with a net operating cash inflow of £17m. The forecast out-turn position was a surplus of £10.9m (equivalent to 7% of income), which represented a £5.4m favourable variance relative to the Quarter 1 position and a £9.8m favourable variance against Court-approved budget (surplus of £1.2m).

Members discussed forecasted total University income (£148.6m), a favourable variance of £10.7 against budget and in particular tuition fee income (£58.9m), forecast to be £11m higher than budget (£47.9m). Considering the forecasted cash position, it was confirmed the University was comfortably covenant compliant in 2021-22.

Members subsequently discussed access to working capital facilities including the HSBC Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), performance against institutional KPIs and indicative high-level forecasts for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years and the underpinning assumptions.

Court received an update on the timeline and development of the Strategic Plan.

Court **considered** and commented on the content of the paper, including the Q2 2021-22 financial forecast.

**\*6 CAPITAL AND MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN UC(21/22)36**

Court received an overview of the updated Capital and Major Infrastructure Plan that included an update on the 2021/22 Quarter 2 forecast and the indicative infrastructure expenditure for a five-year period to 2026. Members discussed progress of projects planned for 2021/22, including the Queen’s Court Link Bridge and Cottrell Building Main University Entrance and an indicative plan for 2021-26. It was confirmed that the rephased total expenditure forecast of £47.5m was inclusive of a c£5m roll forward from 2020/21.

Court **considered** the Capital and Major Infrastructure update.

**\*7. CITY DEAL UC(21/22)37**

Professor Andrew Tyler, Scotland Hydro Nation Chair presented an update on Scotland’s International Environment Centre. Members subsequently received an update from the University’s City Region and Growth Deal Programme Board. This included progress on development of the National Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Hub and confirmation the University received and accepted an offer of investment from Clackmannanshire Fund for development of an Intergenerational Living Innovation Hub, a research and development platform that would respond to the demands of an ageing population.

Court **considered** the report from the University’s City Region and Growth Deal Programme Board.

***GOVERNANCE***

**\*8. AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCES UC(20/21)38**

Court **approved** the amendment to ordinances with respect to Ordinance 30: exclusion from University Campus.

***POLICY AND STRATEGY***

**\*9. SUSTAINABILITY PLAN** **UC(21/22)39**

Members received an overview of the Institutional Sustainability Plan. It was confirmed that the Sustainability Plan would provide an overarching vision and direction for the University and help achieve the target of net-zero by 2040. The Plan would provide a key public-facing resource to articulate institutional activities and direction; it would also support the internationalisation agenda and research profile, enhance the staff and student experience, and support student marketing and associated league table activity.

Members discussed the key themes aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the accompanying objectives and targets. Members noted that an internal enabling delivery plan would be developed to operationalise the commitments set out in the overarching Plan.

Court **approved** the Institutional Sustainability Plan.

***COMMITTEE REPORTS***

**\*10. ACADEMIC COUNCIL** **UC(21/22)40**

Court **considered** the report from the meeting of Academic Council held on 9 March 2022.

**\*11. JOINT POLICY, PLANNING & RESOURCES COMMITTEE UC(21/22)41**

Court **considered** the report from the meeting of Joint Policy, Planning and Resources Committee held on 1 March 2022.

**\*12. AUDIT COMMITTEE** **UC(21/22)42**

Court **considered** the report from the meeting of Audit Committee held on 7 February 2022 and **approved** the recommendation from Audit Committee that the contract for external audit services was awarded to Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) for an initial period of three years, with a commencement date from 1 April 2022.

**\*13. GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE** **UC(21/22)43**

Court **considered** the report of the meeting of Governance and Nominations Committee held on 25 January 2022 and **approved** the appointment of one member of academic staff from Academic Council’s own membership to University Court.

***ACTIVITY UPDATES***

**\*14. STUDENTS’ UNION UPDATE UC(21/22)44**

Members received an update on recent Students’ Union activities including the Union Election for all Sabbatical and Part-time Officer positions, funding arrangements, Clubs and Societies activities and work pertaining to sustainability including a job fair organised in partnership with the careers service and a range of events to be held during Green Week and the Festival of Biodiversity.

Court **considered** the activity update from the Students’ Union.

**\*15. EQUALITY UPDATE** **UC(21/22)45**

Members received an overview of progress on key aspects of the University’s work in equality, diversity and inclusion including the University’s approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence and sexual misconduct, mental health support for students and progress on the development of the institutional anti-racism and race equality strategy.

Court **considered** the update.

**\*16. STAFF AND EMPLOYMENT UPDATE UC(21/22)46**

Members received an update on staff and employment matters that included the 2020 valuation of the Universities Superannuation Scheme and the University’s approach to staff engagement.

Court **considered** the staff and employment update.

***OTHER ITEMS***

**\*17. RISKS ARISING Oral**

Court **considered** risks associated with any items discussed in the context of the agreed risk appetite statement.

**18. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

There was no other competent business

**19. NEXT MEETING**

Court noted the next full meeting of Court was scheduled for 13 June 2022.

**Policy & Planning**

**March 2022**