

Approved



UNIVERSITY COURT

MINUTES

of the meeting of the University Court held on 22 June 2016 at 2pm in the Boardroom of the University.

Chair: Mr E Frizzell
Vice-Chair: Professor E Wilson

Mr M Batho	Mr R Fletcher	Right Rev Dr N Peyton
Mrs L Baxter	Ms G Ghafoor	Mr C Rae
Mr J Burt	Mr C Marshall	Mrs S Scott
Ms A Cameron	Mr C Macdonald	Professor N Seaton
Dr A Cornish	Mr I McDonald	Mr M Shaw
Mr D Dorward	Professor S Olivier	

Secretary: Mrs S Stewart
Clerk to Court: Dr A Ramsay

In attendance: Mrs L Edwards (Item 104)
Professor R Kouhy
Mr G McCullough
Mr D Reeves
Mrs C Summers (Items 95-102)

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms A Boyle, Mr M Grossi, Dr M Hinfelaar, Mr G MacDougall and Dr J Rees. Dr Waiton was not present.

NON-RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

95 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and, in particular, welcomed Mr G McCullough in attendance as incoming Vice-President of the Abertay Students' Association and Professor R Kouhy as an observer from the University Senate.

96 DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to indicate if they had, or could be perceived to have, a conflict of interest in relation to the items for discussion. Mr M Shaw declared a potential conflict of interest in relation to the disposal of Alloway Halls. Court agreed that he need not withdraw from the meeting, but would not take part in direct discussion of that item.

97 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIR'S COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 JUNE 2016

Court noted the above minutes, submitted for information as Enclosure 56.

98 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT HELD ON 23 APRIL 2016 – UNRESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

Court approved the above minutes, submitted as Enclosure 57, as an accurate record.

99 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

The Chair advised Court that there was one matter arising under paragraph 80, regarding the sale of Alloway Halls. Mr Frizzell noted that Court had approved the planned disposal of the residence at its meeting in February 2016 and that a recommendation for the sale to preferred bidder had been circulated electronically.

Members sought clarification of the rationale for the recommendation being made and expressed some concerns. In discussion, members were advised of the advantages of an unencumbered offer and sought assurance that due diligence checks had been performed prior to making the recommendation to Court. The Principal proposed that a further paper would be produced by the Director of Operations, to be circulated electronically, which would delineate the process followed.

Thereafter, Court approved in principle the sale of Alloway Halls to the preferred bidder, subject to receipt of the aforementioned report on due diligence performed.

[Secretary's note: the report was subsequently circulated and accepted by Court.]

Under paragraph 81, The Chair confirmed that the final Outcome Agreement 2016/2017 had been signed by himself and Professor Seaton under the authority delegated by Court at its meeting in April 2016.

Thereafter, Court noted that there were no other matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

100 SENATE REPORT TO COURT ON SESSION 2015/2016

CT/0616/58

The Principal introduced the above paper, intended to provide Court with a succinct summary of the work of Senate and its committees during session 2015/2016. Professor Seaton drew members' attention to the draft Annual Statement on internally-led Review, which required to be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council before 30 September 2016 and which would be updated to reflect the outcome of the internal Programme Survey and the National Student Survey prior to submission.

Professor Seaton advised members that there were no specific items from the Senate report that he wished to draw to the attention of Court and invited members to note the work of Senate in relation to the management of academic standards and the quality of the learning experience for academic session 2015/2016.

Thereafter, Court noted the Annual Report and endorsed the draft Annual Statement, noting that it would be submitted to the SFC before the next meeting of Court.

101 PLANNING AND BUDGETING: DRAFT BUDGET 2016/2017 AND FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

CT/0616/59

The Director of Finance and Research Funding introduced the above paper, which comprised the draft Budget 2017 and financial projections for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. Mr Reeves advised members that the budget had been prepared in accordance with the approach on '*Planning for Sustainability*' delineated at the Court Conference in April 2016. Court noted that the report constituted the introduction of a new financial model to inform resource allocation and a moving-away from annual budgeting to longer-term, multi-year strategic planning. This was intended to improve resource allocation to activities linked closely to strategic priorities with an increased emphasis on sustainability at a time of financial constraint.

Members were advised that the budget was presented with future year indications, comparators of 2016 current forecasts and 2015 actual results. These had been prepared under the old accounting SORP and would later be re-presented under the new SORP, FRS 102. The 5-year capital investment programme had been built into budget and projections for future years and Court would receive a proposal for the summer 2017 programme at its meeting in December 2016. Members were advised that the University expected proposals for transformational change to emerge from the Strategic Review, which would require careful prioritisation for resource allocation and investment. It was to be expected that proposals to accelerate the investment programme would be brought to future meetings.

Mr Reeves advised Court that the University had generated an underlying surplus and cash of £2.1m in 2015 and that the 2016 forecast was for £2.5m. The University was therefore in a strong financial position with one of the highest levels of discretionary reserves in Scotland. Staff costs remained high as a percentage of income, but were not directly comparable with larger institutions where facilities management or commercial service operations were outsourced and not therefore reported as staff expenditure.

In discussion, members sought clarification of the University's position as regards the Dundee Academy of Sport and were advised that the University was in discussion with the Scottish Funding Council. It was noted that any decision taken by Court in relation to accelerating capital expenditure in future should be mindful of the Dundee Academy of Sport.

Court commended the Director of Finance and Research Funding on a clear and comprehensive financial report.

Thereafter, Court approved the Budget 2017 and noted the financial projections for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.

102 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: UPDATE

CT/0616/60

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the above report, which provided Court with its second twice-yearly update on the University's 2020 KPIs. Mrs Summers reminded members that, although reports were provided

twice a year, many indicators were annual measures and could not therefore be updated in every report. In this case, 5 of the 19 KPIs had been updated.

In relation to the results of the staff engagement survey, 2 KPIs had been classified as 'red'. Members noted that Court had already considered the outcomes of the staff survey in some detail, along with actions proposed to address issues raised. Mrs Summers apprised Court that the Finance & Corporate Performance Committee (FCPC) had asked the University to give consideration to how progress addressing these issues might best be reflected in future update reports, given that the staff survey normally took place every two years.

Progress had been made in relation to the percentage of undergraduate students projected to receive a degree and in the number of citations made. The percentage of undergraduate entrants still in HE after one year had declined slightly and had therefore been designated 'amber'. Members noted that this decline partly reflected changes in the way the University recorded qualifications.

Court was advised that one of the recommendations from the recent internal audit of governance was that the University should publish an annual update on progress against KPIs on the website and in the Annual Report. Mrs Summers noted that the University had agreed to publication, but that the format for presentation of that information had not been decided. Members recommended that the University gave careful consideration to the presentation of such information.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

103 COURT CONFERENCE REPORT

CT/0616/61

The University Secretary introduced the above report of the recent Court Conference: 'Achieving Our Potential'. Members reflected upon the themes of the conference and the challenges faced by the institution in planning for its long-term sustainability and success.

Court was advised that the University had already begun to address the issues raised in the discussion groups, establishing partnerships with business and developing innovative teaching space. Applications for the taught postgraduate programmes in Food Technology had increased and the University continued its efforts to provide better sporting facilities for students and staff.

In terms of political lobbying and external engagement, following the Scottish Government reshuffle, the Principal had written to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and invited Mr Swinney to visit the University. Professor Seaton had also recently had an article published in The Herald on improving social mobility and the transition from college to university and had been invited to join a small group of HE leaders created to inform the Scottish Government on matters of funding.

Court welcomed these activities, noting that the discussions at the Conference would continue to feed into the ongoing strategic institutional review and looked forward to receiving further updates as strategies and initiatives emerged and developed.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

104 ABERTAY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT AND BUDGET

CT/0616/62

[Secretary's note: the Chief Executive of the Students' Association joined the meeting at this point]

The President of the Students' Association (SA) introduced the above report, intended to apprise Court of activities in the Abertay SA over the previous year and to inform members of the Association's proposed plans for the next 12 months. Mr Marshall thanked Court for the opportunity to discuss developments since the turnaround process initiated two years ago.

Court was advised that the SA Executive had carried on the excellent work begun by the previous President, Robyn Donoghue, and was striving to build continuity and momentum. Members were apprised of the results of the annual student survey of the Association and actions arising from these results to be accessible to all students and to enable their voices to be heard.

Court noted that the SA had identified key areas including engagement, recognition and leadership. Future priorities had also been recognised as strengthening processes and systems of representation and ensuring support for students through advice and advocacy, as well as fostering employability skills through co-curricular activity and teaching & learning enhancement.

In discussion, members noted the excellent working relationship between the Association and the University, especially in the early recognition of common problems and subsequent collaborative working, such as in the implementation of the 'Prevent' duty.

The Chair then welcomed the Chief Executive of the Association to the meeting. Ms Edwards introduced the SA plan for academic year 2016/2017, noting that the Association intended to diversify funding streams, overhaul its financial systems, establish a trading subsidiary and become an incorporated body. Joint areas of working with the University through the Student Partnership Agreement had identified 5 areas of common purpose: Belonging; Learning Spaces; Assessment & Feedback, and Engagement & Transitions.

Members commended the progress made by the SA and welcomed its publicly-stated ambitions for future development.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

[Secretary's note: the Chief Executive of the Students' Association left the meeting at this point]

105 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2016

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 63, were approved.

The following matter was approved:

105.1 FRS 102

(paragraph 77 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a recommendation from the Director of Finance and Research Funding of changes to accounting procedures as part of the introduction on FRS 102 and the new SORP. The Acting Chair advised members that, although the meeting itself had not been quorate, the approval of all lay and co-opted members of the Committee had been received since the meeting.

Court therefore endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the proposed changes and restated figures be approved.

The following matters were noted:

105.3 Private meeting of Audit Committee with Auditors

(paragraph 68 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had held its annual private meeting with auditors. The Acting Chair advised members that both PWC and KPMG had reported that they received good support from University officers.

105.4 Internal Audit: status report

(paragraph 73 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the internal auditors' summary of progress against the 2015/2016 internal audit plan.

105.5 Internal Audit Review of Payroll & Human Resources: report

(paragraph 73.2 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of an internal audit report on a review of Payroll and Human Resources systems, which had identified 1 moderate- and 3 low-rated recommendations as well as areas of good practice.

105.6 Internal Audit: Follow-up Report

(paragraph 73.3 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a report of a follow-up review to determine progress made by management in implementing previously-agreed internal audit recommendations. The Acting Chair commended the University on having implemented 98% of all recommendations raised by KPMG over the contract period.

105.7 Internal Audit: 2016/2017 Plan

(paragraph 74 refers)

Court noted the Committee's approval of the 2016/2017 internal audit plan, subject to homologation by the whole Committee. Mr McDonald advised Court that this had now been homologated.

105.8 Internal Audit: management report on implementation of recommendations

(paragraph 75 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a report on progress made by management in implementing previously-agreed internal audit recommendations, noting good progress had continued to be made in the number of recommendations now implemented.

105.9 External Audit Plan

(paragraph 76 refers)

Court noted the Committee's approval of the PWC external audit plan, subject to homologation by the whole Committee. Mr McDonald advised Court that this had now been homologated.

105.10 Risk Management Update

(paragraph 78 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a report on Risk Management, which was appended to the minute for the attention of Court.

106 FINANCE & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 MAY 2016

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 64, were approved.

The following matter was approved:

106.1 University Debt Policies

(paragraph 55 refers)

Court endorsed in principle the recommendation of the Committee that the revised University Debt Policies be approved, subject to clarification by the Committee of the £20 charge under paragraph 7.3 of the Student Debt Policy.

The following matters were noted:

106.2 TRAC

(paragraph 50 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received a presentation on the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC), a sector-wide methodology employed to give governing bodies assurance regarding the long-term sustainability of the institution with an associated recommendation to review the calculation of insurance values ahead of the 2016/2017 TRAC.

106.3 University Finance Report

(paragraph 53 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a Finance Report which provided the Committee with an integrated view of the University's current financial position, including the 2016 actual year-to-date result, the 2016/2017 funding allocation and an examination of future outlook, debt management and treasury management.

106.4 Budget 2017

(paragraph 54 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the draft 2017 budget, which had already been discussed as a separate agenda item.

106.5 Estates Development works: update

(paragraph 56 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a report on progress with the Level 4 laboratories and associated external cladding works. Members had accepted the report and had noted that

the Committee would expect to receive the tender report in due course. The Chair apprised Court that this had been received and approved by the Committee via electronic circulation.

106.6 Abertay SA Finances and Plan for 2017

(paragraph 57 refers)

Court the Committee's consideration of the Abertay Students' Association plan for academic year 2016/2017, which had already been discussed under paragraph 104, above.

107 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 MAY 2016

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 65, were approved.

The following matters were noted:

107.1 Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act: Outlining an approach to implementation of the Act at Abertay

(paragraph 46 refers)

Court noted that the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act had received Royal Assent. Details of the implementation period were yet to be announced and a work-plan for the implementation of changes likely to be required to the University's governing order and other policies would be considered at the first meeting of the Committee in session 2016/2017.

107.2 Review of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance: update

(paragraph 47 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received an update on the steering group membership and proposed process for the review of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.

108 PEOPLE, HEALTH & EQUALITY COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2016

Court received and approved the minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 66.

The following matters were noted:

108.1 Race Equality Charter Mark update

(paragraph 70 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered an overview of the University's draft Race Equality Charter Mark (RECM) application. Members noted the Committee's recognition of the significant degree of effort by University staff in the preparation of the application.

108. Staff Engagement Survey update

(paragraph 71 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received a presentation on the work undertaken by the University in response to the Staff Engagement Survey results and the Vice-Principal (Academic) was invited to apprise members of further staff engagement activities.

Professor Olivier noted that a Staff Engagement Advisory Team had been established and that every School and Service had held meetings with HR to consider issues which had emerged from the results. Some immediate and specific changes had been introduced, such as dual screens for support staff and the removal of the requirement for staff to use annual leave to attend University-promoted events.

Consideration was being given to live-streaming meetings of the Senior Management Group to increase transparency; work was underway to reduce reliance on the workload allocation model; and a staff summer party was planned. Separate communications would be issued to targeted groups on specific issues and a 'You said, We did' style of report was also being developed, noting that a multi-faceted approach would be required.

Thereafter, Court commended the work being undertaken by the University and noted that it would expect to receive further progress reports.

109 UK GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER ON HE: SUMMARY OF KEY AREAS CT/0616/67

The University Secretary introduced the above report, for information, intended to apprise Court of some of the potential developments or reforms affecting the HE landscape in the UK.

110 STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT REPORT CT/0616/68

The University Secretary introduced the above report, intended to provide Court with a summary of the wide range of activities undertaken by the Executive Group during the session that could be defined as 'stakeholder engagement'. Mrs Stewart noted that the report covered the period from January to date and also provided an overall view of the total activity for this session compared with the previous session.

In discussion, Court noted that the rationale for the activity was not recorded in all instances. Members requested that consideration be given to a more dynamic system of presenting the information.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

111 GRADUATION CEREMONIES: 7 JULY 2016

The Chair advised Court that the University's Summer Graduation ceremonies would take place on Thursday 7 July 2016 and encouraged members to attend. He advised Court that the Chancellor, Lord Cullen of Whitekirk, would be unable to participate in the proceedings as his presence was required in Edinburgh on that day as a Knight of the Thistle. The Principal and Vice-Chancellor would therefore confer degrees on his behalf.

113 OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEETING Oral Report

The Chair invited members to give observations on the meeting, including the visit to the offices of Registry and Secretariat. Members noted that this had provided insight into the unseen work ongoing at all times to support the student journey and provide Court with assurance on matters of governance.

Professor Kouhy, as an observer from Senate, noted that discussions had been robust and comprehensive and that the meeting, whilst long, had been very enjoyable. In particular, Professor Kouhy commended the finance report as an excellent example of good practice and thanked Court on behalf of Senate for the confidence which the meeting had instilled in him.

114 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

The Chair noted that the non-reserved business of Court was concluded and thanked members for their contribution.

115 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Court noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 19 October 2016 in the Boardroom of the University.

.....
CHAIR

The meeting concluded at 16:25