

Approved



## **UNIVERSITY COURT**

### **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the University Court held on 14 December 2016 at 2pm in the Boardroom of the University.

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

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

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

In attendance: Dr R Falconer  
Mr G McCullough  
Mrs J McKenzie (item 28)  
Ms L McLean  
Dr K Oduyemi  
Mr D Reeves  
Professor C Schaschke  
Mrs C Summers (Item 32)

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms A Boyle, Dr M Hinfelaar and Mrs S Scott.

### **NON-RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS**

#### 26 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and, in particular, welcomed Dr R Falconer, Ms L McLean, Dr K Oduyemi, and Professor C Schaschke, who were attending as observers.

Court thanked the University for the opportunity to visit the collaborative learning space, and the food laboratories currently under redevelopment. Members commended the progress made to date and looked forward to future developments to the estate.

27 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. None was declared.

28 PRESENTATION: EXTERNAL AND CORPORATE RELATIONS

Court received a presentation from the Director of External and Corporate Relations (ECR) on milestones following the creation of the directorate and its vision for the future development of the University. Ms McKenzie apprised members that the Directorate was responsible for activities that enhanced the University's brand in order to support income generation and comprised four teams dedicated to: Marketing Communications; Business Engagement; Recruitment, and Alumni & Development. The Directorate was now co-located on the ground floor of the Kydd Building.

Court was advised of work already undertaken by the Directorate to understand the University's Brand Values and to establish the University's position as bold, ambitious and personal. Recruitment activities had been refocussed and the Business Engagement function offered opportunities for business to engage with the institution on a one-stop shop basis. A new advertising campaign 'Say not to Same, Do Different' had been commissioned featuring Abertay students.

In discussion, one member sought assurances that the new functionality in the website would be accessible on mobiles and tablets and was advised that a new web engine would likely be commissioned. Workshops would be held to inform the future development of the Hannah Maclure Centre as an important cultural space for the University and alumni engagement activities were taking place nationally and globally.

Thereafter, Court viewed the new advertisement and commended Ms McKenzie on it and on progress made thus far.

*[Secretary's note: the Director of External & Corporate Relations left the meeting at this point]*

29 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIR'S COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2016

Court noted the above minutes, submitted for information as Enclosure 19.

30 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT HELD ON 19 OCTOBER 2016 – UNRESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

Court approved the above minutes, submitted as Enclosure 20, as an accurate record, subject to one minor amendment.

31 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

31.1 Reserve Forces Policy

(paragraph 17.1 refers)

Members were advised that the Reserve Forces Policy had been considered by the Joint Liaison Group as noted at the last meeting.

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

32 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

CT/1216/21

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the above twice-yearly update on the University's Key Performance Indicators, which had been considered by the Finance and Corporate Performance Committee at its meeting on 15 November 2016. Mrs Summers reminded Court that many of the indicators were annual measures and could not, therefore, be updated in every report.

Members were advised that 14 of the 19 KPIs had been updated, of which seven retained the same status as the previous update in November 2015. Mrs Summers noted a drop in the proportion of SIMD20/40 entrants, although contextual entrants had increased. The percentage of graduates in graduate-level employment had decreased and this would be addressed through the work of a strategic review group on employability. The number of postgraduate taught students had improved slightly, as had retention / completion rates for entrants articulating into stages 2 and 3. Improvements had also been seen in the number of alumni involved in the mentoring programme and in total research grant and contract income. The remaining KPI in relation to the number of students taking up work experience had not been updated, as it had proven problematic to quantify progress.

Members sought further information on actions proposed to improve the number of graduates in graduate-level employment and requested that the findings of the review group be brought to Court in April 2017.

Court requested an update on the University's position in relation to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and whether Abertay would be likely to participate. Professor Olivier advised members that it had been hoped that a consensus could be achieved across the Scottish HE sector but that the University's guiding principle in deciding to enter the TEF was whether it would prove to be of benefit to the institution. A staff debate would be held the following week to consider the opportunities participation might afford. Court requested to be kept apprised of developments in relation to the TEF.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

*[Secretary's note: the Director of Strategic Planning left the meeting at this point]*

33 REPORT OF SENATE

CT/1216/22

Court received and considered the above summary of matters discussed by Senate at its most recent meeting in November. Members noted that Senate had engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding the membership of that body in view of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016; and those members of Court who had been in attendance at the meeting commended the quality of the debate.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

34 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2016 AND APPENDIX

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 23, were approved.

The following matters were noted:

34.1 Internal Audit: Follow-up Report

(paragraph 22 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. Members noted that good progress had been made overall.

34.2 Risk Management

(paragraph 24 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the above Risk Management policy, framework and updated risk register

35 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE ON 2015/2016

CT/1216/24

Court received and considered the Committee's annual report to Court for session 2015/2016, which had been discussed at the meeting of the Committee held on 22 November.

Thereafter, Court approved the report

36 FINANCE & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2016

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 25, were approved.

The following matter was approved:

36.1 Committee Membership

(paragraph 29 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the membership of the Committee be expanded to include one of the staff members of Court. Court referred the matter to the Governance and Nominations Committee to be progressed.

The following matters were noted:

36.2 University Finance Report

(paragraph 24 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the above report, which provided the Committee with an integrated view of the University's current financial position including the first quarter result, an examination of future outlook, Debt Management and Treasury Management.

36.3 Kydd Building Project Update

(paragraph 26 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received an update from the Director of Operations on progress made on the current Kydd Building laboratory and cladding project.

36.4 Abertay Students' Association management accounts and draft trustees annual report

(paragraph 28 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and noted the annual draft Statement of Financial Activities, balance sheet and the Annual Report of the Trustees of the Abertay Students' Association, which had been produced in accordance with the new charities' Statement of Recommended Practice.

37 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2016

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 26, were approved.

The following matters were approved:

37.1 Periodic Review of Court's Effectiveness

(paragraph 5 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee to approve proposed arrangements for the periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of Court and its committees, in compliance with both the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance and guidance from the Scottish Funding Council.

37.2 Membership of Court

(paragraph 7 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that three lay members of Court be re-appointed for a three-year period each.

The following matters were noted:

37.3 Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act: work-plan for implementation of the Act at Abertay

(paragraph 4 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received an update on the University's thinking in relation to the implementation of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act.

37.4 Review of the Standing Orders of Court

(paragraph 6 refers)

Court noted the Committee's approval of one minor amendment to the Standing Orders of Court

38 PEOPLE, HEALTH & EQUALITY COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2016

Court received and approved the minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 27.

The following matters were noted:

38.1 Exit Interview Report (paragraph 22 refers)  
Court noted the Committee's consideration of the above report on exit interviews.

38.2 Employee Relations Casework Report (paragraph 23 refers)  
Court noted the Committee's consideration of a report on formal disciplinary, capability and grievance cases across the University over the three previous years.

38.3 Employee Relations / Joint Liaison Group (paragraph 26 refers)  
Court noted that the Committee had been apprised of a number of matters in relation to employee relations and the joint liaison group.

39 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT: JULY 2016- DECEMBER 2016 CT/1216/28

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 which could be defined as 'stakeholder engagement' during the period from July to December 2016. Mrs Stewart noted that this iteration of the report had attempted to address members' requests for a more nuanced and explanatory report.

Members were apprised of future development of stakeholder engagement thinking and noted management's intention of producing a more holistic, corporate approach to stakeholder engagement reporting in future. Court agreed this change in approach and requested that consideration be given to reflecting the outcomes of stakeholder engagement activities.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

40 DEPARTURE OF MEMBER

Court was reminded that this was the last meeting to be attended by Mr Colin Macdonald, who would step down formally as of 31 December 2016 after 9 years' membership of Court. Members noted that Mr Macdonald had been a member of the Finance, People & General Purposes Committee and thereafter the Finance & Corporate Performance Committee.

The Chair, on behalf of Court, thanked Mr Macdonald for his distinctive contribution to Court and to the University. Mr Macdonald thanked Court for their good wishes.

41 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

The Chair noted that the non-reserved business of Court was concluded and thanked members for their contribution during what had been a very successful year for Abertay. Mr Frizzell then wished all attendees a 'Merry Christmas'.

42 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Court noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 15 February 2017 in the Boardroom of the University.

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**CHAIR**