

Approved



UNIVERSITY COURT

MINUTES

of the meeting of the University Court held on 18 October 2017 at 2pm in the Boardroom of the University.

Chair: Mr E Frizzell

Vice-Chair: Professor E Wilson

Mr M Batho
Mrs L Baxter
Ms A Boyle
Mr J Burt
Ms A Cameron
Mr D Dorward

Mr R Fletcher
Ms G Ghafoor
Mr G MacDougall
Mr I McDonald
Professor S Olivier
Mr C Rae

Dr J Rees
Mrs S Scott
Professor N Seaton
Mr M Shaw
Dr S Waiton
Mr T Wilson

Secretary: Mrs S Stewart

Clerk to Court: Dr A Ramsay

In attendance: Ms D Bandeva
Dr Y Deeni
Ms K Johnson
Ms C MacEachen
Mrs D Norris (item 11)
Mr D Reeves
Mrs C Summers (items 1-7)

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Dr A Cornish, Dr M Hinfelaar and Professor S Olivier.

NON-RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. In particular, Mr Frizzell welcomed Mr T Wilson and Ms D Bandeva to their first official meeting of Court as President and Vice-President of the Students' Association respectively. The Chair also welcomed Dr Y Deeni as Senate observer and Ms K Johnson and Ms C MacEachen, attending as observers from amongst members of staff.

Mr Frizzell thanked management for the tour of the refurbished areas of the Bernard King Library and invited comments from members. Court noted the atmosphere of purposeful activity in the building and commended the impressive developments.

2 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 non-reserved items for discussion. None were declared.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIR'S COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2017

Court noted the above minutes, submitted for information as Enclosure 1.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT HELD ON 21 JUNE 2017 – UNRESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

Court approved the above minutes, submitted as Enclosure 2, as an accurate record.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

The University Secretary advised Court, under paragraph 98, that the annual statement on quality had been submitted to the SFC by the deadline of 30 September 2017. Thereafter, members were advised that there were no other matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

6 SFC OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2016/2017 SELF-EVALUATION

CT/1017/03

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the above paper, intended to provide Court with the University's draft self-evaluation report on progress against the specific outcomes included in the University's 2016/2017 outcome agreement with the SFC. Mrs Summers noted that Court had previously received updates on progress as part of the development of the 2017/2018 outcome agreement and that members had also been informed as part of the routine monitoring of KPIs. There were therefore no significant issues for particular consideration.

A member questioned the continued need for the four-year degree structure and was advised that the University remained committed to the nature of a four-year programme. Members considered the benefits of retaining the four-year degree and the fit with the widening access mission of the University as it facilitated alternative, non-traditional routes into higher education.

In the course of a lengthy discussion, Court considered the University's performance across the range of outcome agreement targets and members expressed unease in relation to some of these. The Director of Strategic Planning and the Principal assured members that the SFC had no concerns regarding the University's performance. The President of the Students' Association called for greater effort in retaining SIMD20/40 students. Mrs Summers noted that the most recent statistics related to 2015/2016 and she pointed to the work undertaken since that time by the University in supporting disadvantaged students, including the appointment of two student retention officers within Student Services.

A member requested an update on the Dundee Academy of Sport and was advised that the University continued to explore the possibility of identifying another institution to support the project. Court noted that the SFC was under

increasing pressure not to cut core teaching and research income and that funding for other projects would inevitably decline. The Pupil Equity Fund had been identified as a potential source of income for enhancing the longevity of the Dundee Academy of Sport and it was agreed that an update on this would be provided to Court at its next meeting.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

7 ABERTAY UNIVERSITY INTEGRATED REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017

CT/1017/04

The Director of Finance and Research Funding introduced the above report, intended to provide Court with audited financial statements in order that it could discharge its responsibilities under the Financial Memorandum. Mr Reeves thanked colleagues within the University and members of Court for their contributions to the production of the integrated report and the technical annex.

Court noted that, following agreement at the Court Conference, the University had moved to a three-year operational plan, underpinned by detailed School and Service operational plans. Members were further advised that the integrated report had already been considered by the Audit & Risk Committee and the Finance & Corporate Performance Committee.

In discussion, Court commended the accessibility of the accounts, noting with approbation the inclusion of the William Sword Legacy in the narrative as being the first significant bequest to the University, and one which would make significant contribution to the future of the institution.

Thereafter, Court noted the report and commended the integrated report and financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2017, subject to one minor typographical amendment.

8 SENATE REPORT

CT/1017/05

The University Secretary introduced the above report, intended to provide Court with a summary of the matters discussed by Senate at its meeting on 4 October 2017, including Senate's decision in relation to academic session dates from session 2018/2019.

The elected member of academic staff on Court reiterated his position in relation to the topic of grade inflation in higher education, as indicated in the report. The Chair of Court reminded members that Court delegated the academic management of the University to the Senate and that Senate was therefore the appropriate forum for further discussion on this general topic.

9 REPORTS RELATING TO 2016/2017

9.1 Health, Safety & Welfare

CT/1017/06

The Vice-Principal (University Services) introduced the above annual report, intended to provide Court with an overview of University activities in the management of health, safety and welfare issues. Mr Batho noted that the Health & Safety Sub-Committee had approved the report and drew members' attention to a number of key issues. Court noted that the University had retained its Bronze, Silver and

Gold Healthy Working Lives awards and that there had been an encouraging decline in reportable injuries during 2016/2017. One member questioned why it appeared that more staff had been injured than students and it was agreed that an update would be provided to a future meeting of Court.

Court noted that, following the fire at Grenfell Tower, the University had undertaken a review of cladding on its properties and identified that a type of cladding similar to that used in Grenfell Tower was present in part of the Kydd Building. Members noted that Fire Safety Enforcement officers had visited the University to undertake a Fire Safety Audit, taking into consideration the University's internal review and had agreed with the mitigating actions identified by the University. In discussion, members sought clarification as to the impact of this discovery on the University's plans for the North Elevation cladding project and were advised that this would likely alter the schedule and scope of the summer 2018 works whilst potential new fire regulations were awaited.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

9.2 Complaints handling

CT/1017/07

The Head of Governance introduced the above report, required by law, on the handling of complaints by the University in 2016/2017. Dr Ramsay advised Court that the University had experienced an increase in the number of complaints compared to the previous year but that the numbers remained low compared to the sector average and in comparison with prior years.

In discussion, one member questioned the relatively high number of complaints from BME students and was advised that this related to a management decision to withdraw from a voluntary UK Government scheme, which had generated a small number of complaints from Overseas students from the African sub-continent. The member requested that the University scrutinise complaints from the protected characteristics and was advised that complainants were not compelled to supply this information. Nevertheless, the University agreed to undertake such an analysis and report to Court at a future meeting.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

9.3 Prevent Duty

CT/1017/08

The University Secretary introduced the above report, intended to apprise Court of the University's activities in complying with the Prevent Duty imposed under Section 26(1) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015). Mrs Stewart noted the light-touch approach adopted in Scotland and drew members' attention to the composition of the University Prevent Group and the University's representation on the Scottish HE Prevent Working Group.

The President of the Abertay Students' Association expressed his disapprobation of the Prevent Duty from an ethical perspective and noted his belief that activities should be community-centred within the City of Dundee as a whole. Mr Wilson was advised that the

University's approach was intended to safeguard the wellbeing of its students in as non-intrusive way as possible.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

10 INDICATIVE COURT BUSINESS FOR 2017/2018

CT/1017/09

The University Secretary introduced the above indicative workplan for Court in Session 2017/2018, intended to offer members an opportunity to comment. A member requested that the support and recruitment of widening access students be considered as a future agenda item. It was agreed that Student Support would be explored at the Court Conference in April 2018. The Chair of the People, Health & Equality Committee requested that the University continue to report to Court on the implications of Brexit for the institution.

Thereafter, Court noted the plan.

11 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2017

[Secretary's note: Mrs D Norris joined the meeting at this point]

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 10, were received, the meeting having been inquorate.

The following matters were noted:

11.1 Internal Audit 2017/2018 Final Plan

(paragraph 7 refers)

Court noted that members of the Audit Committee had approved the Internal Audit 2017/18 Final Plan, to be undertaken by BDO, having been approved by the Executive Group and discussed by the Senior Management Group.

11.2 External Audit Annual Report for year to 31 July 2017

(paragraph 8 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the draft External Audit Annual Report for year to 31 July 2017 from the external auditors. The external auditors were of the opinion that no significant control issues had been identified, with management proactive in addressing any weaknesses.

11.3 Draft Abertay Integrated Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2017

(paragraph 9 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the draft Abertay Integrated Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2017; that the report had been scrutinised by the University's external auditors, E&Y; and had been discussed under item 7, above.

The Chair of the Governance & Nominations Committee expressed dissatisfaction that the Committee had been inquorate, whilst noting that this was not a regular occurrence. Court was assured that the Governance & Nominations Committee was addressing the membership of the Audit & Risk Committee.

[Secretary's note: Mrs D Norris left the meeting at this point]

12 FINANCE & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2017

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 10, were approved. The following matters were noted:

12.1 Draft University 2017 Integrated Report and Financial Statements
(paragraph 5 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the draft University 2017 Integrated Report and Financial Statements, which had already been considered under item 7, above.

12.2 SFC 2016/2017 Outcome Agreement Self-Evaluation
(paragraph 6 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the SFC 2016/2017 Outcome Agreement Self Evaluation, which had been discussed under item 6, above.

12.3 University Finance Report
(paragraph 7 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had reviewed the University Finance Report, which included an integrated view of the University's current financial position and financial results to date.

12.4 Capital Projects: Estates Development Update
(paragraph 8 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a Capital Projects: Estates Development Update, which gave members an update on the Bernard King Library refurbishment, Level 4 laboratories and cladding, North Wing recladding of the Kydd Building and Old College heating.

12.5 Update to Revisions to KPIs
(paragraph 9 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received an update on revisions to KPIs to address issues with data availability and quality.

13 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2017

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 12, were approved. The following matters were noted:

13.1 Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act: workplan for implementation
(paragraph 6 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and noted the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act workplan for implementation, which had provided the Committee with an update on developments with regard to the implementation of the legislation at the University.

13.2 Review of Scottish Code of Good HE Governance
(paragraph 9 refers)

Court noted the Committee's detailed consideration of the Review of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance, confirming that the Committee of Scottish Chairs had accepted the revised Code.

14 PEOPLE, HEALTH & EQUALITY COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2017

Court received and approved the minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 13. The following matters were approved by Court;

14.1 Visiting and Emeritus Title Policy (paragraph 6 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the Visiting and Emeritus Title Policy, appended to the minute for the attention of members, be approved.

14.2 Buying Annual Leave Policy (paragraph 7 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the Buying Annual Leave Policy, appended to the minute for the attention of members, be approved.

14.3 Sabbatical Leave Policy (paragraph 8 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the Sabbatical Leave Policy, appended to the minute for the attention of members, be approved.

14.4 Severance Statement Revision (paragraph 9 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the revisions to the Severance Statement, appended to the minute for the attention of members, be approved.

14.5 Prevent Duty Annual Report (paragraph 14 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the Prevent Duty Annual Report, which had already been considered by Court as a substantive agenda item.

14.6 University Health, Safety and Welfare Report 2016/2017 (paragraph 17.1 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the Health, Safety and Welfare Annual Report, which had already been considered by Court as a substantive agenda item.

The following matters were noted:

14.7 Employee Relations Report (paragraph 5 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the latest Employee Relations Report, which provided information about formal discipline, capability and grievance cases for the last four years.

14.8 Staff Survey (paragraph 12 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received a paper on the 2017 Staff Survey, noting that the deadline had been extended for one further week to increase completion rates.

15 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE REPORT - UNRESERVED

CT/1017/14

The University Secretary introduced the above report, which provided a summary of the considerations of the Remuneration Committee. Members noted that specific information about the Committee's decisions regarding the remuneration of individuals would be provided as a separate reserved item.

16 ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

CT/1017/15

Court received and noted the above follow-up report produced by the University in relation to the most recent QAA ELIR, intended to demonstrate that the institution had reflected on the outcomes of ELIR and taken appropriate actions on the basis of that reflection. Thereafter, Court endorsed the report, which would be submitted to QAA (Scotland).

17 APPRAISAL OF CHAIR OF COURT - REMINDER OF ROLE OF INTERMEDIARY

The University Secretary introduced the above report, which reminded members of the process and timescale for the Intermediary to hold discussions with members in relation to the appraisal of the Chair of Court.

18 GRADUATION CEREMONY

The Chair reminded Court that the University's next Graduation Ceremony would take place on 24 November 2017 and encouraged members to attend.

19 DEPARTURE OF MEMBER

The Chair noted that this would be the last meeting of Court to be attended by Ms A Boyle. On behalf of Court, Mr Frizzell thanked Ms Boyle for her service and wished her every future success.

20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

One Court member requested an update on student numbers and was advised that the University had admitted 20% more students than predicted, against a background of slowing recruitment. The University's association with Perfect World in China had resulted in higher postgraduate Overseas numbers, which management expected to increase again in session 2018/2019. Undergraduate Overseas numbers remained a cause for concern and the University recognised the need to improve in future.

21 OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEETING

Members and observers were invited to give their observations on the meeting. The members of academic staff in attendance noted that the depth of knowledge and interest displayed by members gave great reassurance and thanked Court for their participation.

22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Court noted that the next meeting would take place on 20 December at 2pm in the Boardroom of the University.

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CHAIR