

Approved



## **UNIVERSITY COURT**

### **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the University Court held on 18 September 2019 at 2.30pm in the Merion Suite of the Carnoustie Golf Hotel.

Chair: Mr M Shaw  
Vice-Chair: Mrs S Scott

Professor L Bacon	Mrs M Guild	Ms C MacEachen
Mr A Bailey	Dr A Ingram	Mr J Macgregor
Mr J Barnett	Professor T Inns	Mr T Marks
Mr M Batho	Mr F Keir	Dr J Rees
Mr J Burt	Mr I Lowe	Professor N Seaton
Ms S Devautour	Ms V Lynch	Dr K Smith
Ms G Ghafoor	Mr G MacDougall	Mr O Wright

Secretary: Mrs S Stewart  
Clerk to Court: Dr A Ramsay  
In attendance: Professor A Brown  
Mr S Uphill

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr I McDonald and Ms F Robertson.

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

#### 1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. In particular, Mr Shaw welcomed new members Ms S Devautour, Mrs M Guild, Professor T Inns, Ms C MacEachen, Mr J Macgregor and Mr T Marks to their first meeting of Court.

#### 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 was disclosed.

#### 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT HELD ON 26 JUNE 2019 – UNRESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

Court approved the above minutes, submitted as Enclosure 1, as an accurate record. The University Secretary advised members that comments on the minutes had been submitted by Ms F Robertson and that she had discussed these with the Chair and they would be incorporated.

#### 4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

The University Secretary apprised Court of the following:

##### 4.1 New University Order of Council

(paragraph 79 refers)

Mrs Stewart noted that the new Governing Order for the University had come into effect on 1 September 2019 and that efforts would continue to remove references to the University's former legal name.

##### 4.2 Nomination of the next Chancellor of the University

(paragraph 80 refers)

Mrs Stewart advised Court that the installation of Professor Alice Brown as the next Chancellor of the University would take place on 22 November 2019. Invited guests would include Principals of other Scottish higher education institutions and local dignitaries.

##### 4.2 Annual Report to SFC on Quality 2018/2019

(paragraph 83 refers)

Mrs Stewart reminded Court that it had delegated authority to the Chair to approve the final annual report to SFC, which could be now be completed following the release of the NSS 2019 results.

Thereafter, members were advised that there were no other matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

#### 5 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS) 2019 OUTCOME AND ANALYSIS

CT/0919/02

CT/0919/03

The Principal introduced the above papers, which provided Court with a summary of the outcome of the 2019 National Student Survey (NSS). Professor Seaton advised Court that management was pleased with the overall results and thanked Mr Nicholson and Dr Robertson for their timely and insightful analysis of the results.

Court noted that management aspired to a position of continuous improvement and that some programmes remained whose scores would be improved. This notwithstanding, the University had achieved the fourth highest NSS result in Scotland with the second largest increase in overall satisfaction in the UK. Professor Seaton advised members that management remained committed to maintaining this momentum and that areas for further improvement had been identified.

In discussion, Court noted that, as a small institution with relatively low student numbers, fluctuations could impact scores disproportionately and that the Academic Leadership Group would meet to consider the results in more detail at School and programme level. The attainment and satisfaction gap between BAME and white students was noted as being wider than before, despite both having improved.

Court considered the implications of Abertay Students' Association having discouraged its members from participating in the NSS and noted that the participation rate had been the lowest for some years despite the very extensive work done by the University to encourage engagement. Professor Seaton pointed to the success of those institutions where the Principal and Student President worked together to achieve high levels of participation.

Court welcomed this most positive result and commended the University for having responded swiftly to the negative experience of the previous year's survey.

6 APPOINTMENT OF THE NEXT VICE-CHAIR OF COURT

CT/0919/04

The University Secretary noted that the period of office of the current Vice-Chair of Court would end on 31 December 2019. Mrs Stewart invited members to submit expressions of interest or to approach her or the Chair to discuss the matter informally.

7 INDICATIVE COURT BUSINESS FOR 2019/2020

CT/0919/05

The University Secretary introduced the above broad indication of the planned work of Court for the coming session, particularly in terms of the development of the next strategic plan. She invited members to submit comments and suggestions for topics or alternative means of engagement.

Thereafter, Court noted the proposed programme of work.

8 PREVENT DUTY ANNUAL REPORT

CT/0919/06

The University Secretary introduced the above report, intended to provide Court with assurance that the University had discharged its responsibilities in relation to Section 26(1) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent students being drawn into terrorism. Mrs Stewart advised members that a Prevent Duty Group met regularly and had oversight of the Prevent Duty implementation plan. She advised Court that there were no particular issues of note, but that the University remained vigilant whilst maintaining its commitment to freedom of speech and academic freedom.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

9 ABERTAY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION: REVISION OF CONSTITUTION

CT/0919/06

The University Secretary reminded Court of its responsibility for approval of the Students' Association constitution at five-year intervals. Mrs Stewart noted that the Abertay SA current constitution was last approved by Court in December 2014 and was therefore due to be reviewed.

Members were advised that the Association was in the process of consulting its members and had also conducted a democracy review in session 2018/2019. The Association was keen to introduce changes to improve membership engagement ahead of the formal review that been approved by the Students' Representative Council and the Association's trustee board and wished Court to be apprised of these changes.

Thereafter, Court noted that it would receive and consider the proposed revised constitution in due course.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The President and Vice-President of the Students' Association advised Court that management's decision to close Bar One in the Student Centre had

impacted adversely on the Association's ability to use the facility for its Freshers' week activities. Court was assured by the Executive that lessons had been learned and that planning would begin earlier in future.

Members congratulated the University on having been shortlisted for three awards in the Times Higher Education Awards, noting that the awards ceremony would take place in London in November.

Thereafter, no other business was declared

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Court noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

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**CHAIR**