

Approved



UNIVERSITY COURT

MINUTES

of the meeting of the University Court held on 24 November 2021 at 2.00pm in Room 1007 of Old College and via Microsoft Teams.

Chair: Mr M Shaw
Vice-Chair: Dr A Ingram

Mr A Bailey	Mr F Jakimow	Dr H Mehrpouya
Professor L Bacon	Ms V Lynch	Ms F Robertson
Mrs A Duffy	Mr J Macgregor	Professor N Seaton
Mrs H Dunk	Mr T Marks	Dr K Smith
Ms G Ghafoor	Mr I McDonald	Ms C Summers
Mrs L Hamilton	Mr G MacDougall	Ms R Thiel
	Ms C MacEachen	

Secretary: Mrs S Stewart
Clerk to Court: Dr A Ramsay
In attendance: Ms E Fraser
Ms J McKenzie
Mr G Weir
Professor E Sim
Professor A Brown, Chancellor

NON-RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

12 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and, most especially, welcomed the Chancellor, Professor Alice Brown, to this meeting of Court. Mr Shaw also warmly welcomed Professor Edith Sim, who was joining the meeting as an observer in advance of becoming a Court member on 1 January 2022. Those in attendance were noted as Ms E Fraser, Ms J McKenzie, and Mr G Weir.

Apologies were received from Ms N Ahmed.

13 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. No declaration was made.

14 MINUTES OF THE CHAIR'S COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2021

CT/1121/08

Court noted the above minutes for information. The Chair advised members that the Director of People and Organisational Development and the Director of FICS had undertaken to establish with which USS reporting mechanism the

University would have to comply.

15 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COURT HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2021:
UNRESERVED

CT/1121/09

Court received and considered the above minutes and approved them as an accurate record.

16 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

Oral report

The University Secretary advised Court that there were no matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

17 COURT INTERMEDIARY APPOINTMENT

Oral report

The Chair reminded Court that, as this would be the last meeting attended by Mr G MacDougall, a new Court Intermediary would be required from 1st January 2022. Mr Shaw advised members that Ms V Lynch had agreed to take on the role. Court welcomed the appointment and thanked Ms Lynch.

18 COVID-19: UPDATE ON UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS DURING THE
PANDEMIC

CT/1121/10

The Principal introduced the above report, intended to provide Court with an overview of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the University's staff and actions taken to support staff. Professor Seaton noted that the University continued to operate under its 'Open Access' mode, which corresponded to the Scottish Government's 'beyond level zero' guidance. 24 student cases of COVID-19 and 11 staff cases had been recorded since the last meeting of Court, and there was no evidence to suggest that those individuals had been infected on campus.

Court was advised that academic programmes were being delivered by blended learning during the current academic session. Students were on campus for approximately six hours per week, typically over two days, with a room occupancy that corresponded to a physical separation of 1m between students (typically about 50% of the usual maximum capacity). As required by Open Access and by Scottish Government regulation, a number of Covid safety measures remained in place, including management of foot traffic, the use of masks in corridors and in some study and work environments, enhanced cleaning, the use of hand sanitisers and the recording of the presence of staff, students and visitors on campus. There were still some multiple classes because of reduced room occupancy, but fewer than in the last academic year. This had allowed the University to give students twice as much time on campus as in the last academic year.

Professor Seaton noted that management had decided to deliver teaching in Term 2 on the same blended-learning model as had been used in Term 1 but to increase the maximum occupancy of the classrooms to 75% of the usual capacity. This would be in line with Open Access and with Scottish Government regulations and reflected the risk assessment for classroom teaching. This change would further reduce the amount of duplicate teaching. Laboratory and other practical classes would continue to be subject to their own risk assessments, given the greater complexity of these environments; it was likely that occupancy rates would be higher than at present in some laboratories.

Members were apprised that the political environment in connection with Covid continued to be problematical. While the Scottish Government did not wish to change the regulations that governed the HE sector's management of the pandemic, considerable pressure had been placed on universities not to make any changes to the delivery of teaching after Christmas (for example in the time students spend on campus or in the occupancy of teaching spaces). Political pressure had gradually increased, with the latest communication from the Scottish Government (a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills) having arrived earlier in the week. In all universities, planning for teaching after Christmas was already well advanced and it seemed unlikely that any institution would change their plans in response to this pressure; indeed, given the complexity of scheduling academic activity, to do so would be a significant technical challenge. Professor Seaton assured Court that the institution would engage politically to explain its actions, both as an individual institution and collectively through Universities Scotland.

Thereafter, Court noted the report and commended the staff and management of the University.

19 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2021: MAIN REPORT

CT/1121/11

The Deputy Principal introduced the above analysis of the results of the National Student Survey 2021. Professor Bacon reminded Court that the report should be read in the context of the impact which the global pandemic had on the delivery of on-campus in-person teaching. Whereas in Term 1, students had been provided with one 3-hour block of teaching per programme, in Term 2 (during the period of the NSS survey) all teaching was delivered online except for essential wet laboratory work. The shift to online learning would have restricted access for some to specialist IT hardware and software and it was not unreasonable to infer that having no access to University facilities in the final term of study had impacted on student satisfaction scores. Overall satisfaction had fallen substantially in 2021, by ten percentage points from 2020.

Abertay had achieved a 70% response rate to the 27 core questions but had not reached the 50% response rate required to receive comparative quantitative data for the six additional Covid-specific questions introduced for 2021. In 21 out of 27 questions, University satisfaction scores were above the sector. In two of these, Abertay outperformed the sector to a statistically significant degree, a reduction of eight compared to 2020. There were, however, three questions where Abertay's satisfaction levels were lower than the sector. These related to Learning Opportunities, Learning Community, and the Students' Association. There was also a notable decline in the overall satisfaction score for the School of Design & Informatics, both in absolute terms and in contrast to the other Schools.

Members noted that in 2020, three programmes had been identified as underperforming compared to the sector, a figure which had risen to five in 2021. In relation to the qualitative comments received, the majority were positive, especially for the theme of 'Supportive, passionate teachers'. Whilst Abertay's ranking had dipped overall, the University continued to compare favourably compared to the rest of the sector and Professor Bacon commended colleagues across the institution.

In discussion, members broadly welcomed the results but noted that certain

courses continued to perform poorly and sought assurances that management intended to address these. Professor Bacon advised Court that the Executive and the Deans of School continued to develop an action plan introduced some years prior. A correlation between those students not receiving prompt feedback feeling undervalued by the University and therefore not participating was identified, although it was noted that feedback and assessment was an issue for many universities. It was vital, in terms of retention as well as the NSS, that Schools engaged with students.

Members were advised that the issues affecting individual scores were not always the same each year and noted that many modules were shared between high-performing and less well performing programmes. The large proportion of direct entrants to the University was identified as a potential factor in student satisfaction levels and it was suggested that more proactive engagement with students articulating from college could help to manage expectations of the University student experience. It was also proposed that the University should map the learner journey to identify areas for improving the student experience. The President of Abertay SA advised Court that not having a physical student space had impacted on the scores relating to the learner community and the student union and that the Abertay SA Vice-President would be writing to the Office for Students to raise the issue of terminology used in the survey.

Thereafter, Court noted the report and requested that a further, more detailed analysis of the survey, with the accompanying action plan, be submitted to its meeting in April 2022.

20 STUDENT RETENTION REPORT

CT/1121/12

The Principal introduced the paper, intended to provide Court with an analysis of student retention at Abertay, summarising current work in that area and outlining further actions intended to improve retention. Professor Seaton noted that, despite interventions over the years, Abertay's retention figures compared poorly with those of many other comparable universities. Court had expressed concern about this area for some time and had sought reassurance from management after the two KPIs related to retention and completion had been rated as red in the most recent KPI report.

Members were advised that the University had a strong commitment to supporting its students, evidenced by a vigorous culture of intervention but which did not appear to translate into the improvement of student retention. As an indicator of the student experience and of student success, poor retention rates had the potential to damage the University, not only from a reputational perspective but also in terms of filling funded places and a failure to meet targets set with SFC.

Management had therefore conducted a comprehensive investigation into the University's retention performance over recent months to better understand the figures and to identify areas where the institution should consider changing policy or practice. Abertay's KPIs were based on the external indicators published by HESA, which allowed the University to measure its performance against other institutions. Against these figures, Abertay was second bottom in Scotland for students remaining in HE one year after joining.

Professor Seaton apprised Court of initiatives recently introduced which,

whilst already making a difference to students, had not yet had an impact on the non-continuation indicators published by HESA. A Student Success Officer (SSO) had been appointed for each School, whose role was to proactively contact students who did not appear to be engaging. Early signs were encouraging and, whilst the early focus was on first-year students, continuing students would be included as the year progressed. In addition, the University had revisited its academic regulations, which had previously been particularly stringent and out-of-line with sector norms. Other work was underway to refresh the relationship with the Students' Association and engage in more collaborative activity and - based on evidence from the NSS - to establish clear guidelines on staff and student expectations.

In discussion, Court noted that significant numbers of those students articulating from partner colleges with HNCs withdrew each year compared to those who entered directly with a HND. Professor Seaton advised members that the University did not require a graded unit from articulating students. This was core to the institutional mission to offer opportunities for education but could be a factor in these students failing to progress. Management would be reviewing the University's admissions policy to consider whether the institution was admitting students who were adequately qualified and prepared to succeed. This would also entail a review of the transition process from college to University to better manage the move from FE to HE. Members were advised that the introduction of the SSO role had already begun to have an impact and that the qualitative data being gathered during their discussions with at-risk students would be invaluable in understanding this issue. It was also intended that the SSOs would work proactively with students with caring responsibilities.

Court welcomed the document as an early overview of the complex interrelationship of factors contributing to a lack of student success but requested that a more detailed review be prepared that provided a greater understanding of the reasons why students chose to leave. It was also requested that a more detailed analysis be provided by age, gender, and SIMD background.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

21 SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

CT/1121/13

The Vice-Principal (Strategy & Planning) introduced the above draft outcome agreement for 2021/2022 which had been developed in line with Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance for this transitional year. Ms Summers noted that all institutions were required to submit an outcome agreement for 2021/2022, approved by their governing body, to SFC by the end of November. Court was advised that, prior to the pandemic, the expectation had been that the institution had a three-year rolling outcome agreement updated annually but that the process remained in flux pending the outcome of the ongoing review of SFC.

Members were advised that an earlier iteration of the document had been considered by the Finance, People & Corporate Performance Committee in November and that the final draft had been discussed with the Senior Management Team, the Students' Association, and the trade unions. Management had streamlined the document, focussing on the specific information required. Unlike previous years, the University had not been required to commit to future targets but it was expected that the next iteration

of the process would involve target setting, in line with the new national outcome and impact framework.

Thereafter, Court approved the Outcome Agreement 2021/2022 for submission to SFC.

22 PROPOSAL REGARDING RESIDENCES

CT/1121/14

The Director of Finance, Infrastructure & Corporate Services (FICS) introduced the above proposal to withdraw from the direct provision of halls of residence. Mr Weir advised Court that the University currently owned and operated two halls of residence (at Meadowside and Lyon Street) offering a total of 200 places. The University also had nominations arrangements in place with two privately-operated residences in Parker Street and Keiller Court which could make direct placements for up to 498 students and potentially 120 students respectively.

Members noted that a review had been undertaken, working with colleagues from the finance and estates teams, to develop an understanding of the overall cost, income, and risk profile of the University-owned residences. The Executive Group and Senior Management Team (SMT) had considered the preliminary conclusions of the review with subsequent discussions held with the affected staff and the Abertay SA. Pending Court's decision, the University had not advertised Meadowside and Lyon Street for academic session 2022/2023.

Mr Weir advised Court that operating halls of residence was an intrinsically high-risk activity, both reputationally and in terms of maintenance. The financial benefit to the University of providing accommodation was marginal and was erased by indirect costs and the need for the substantial refurbishment of both properties. The £1.5m required for the most basic maintenance would benefit only 200 students, whereas disposal presented an opportunity for the sum to be used differently and to the benefit of the wider student population. The proposal was noted as having received significant consideration at the most recent meeting of the Finance & Corporate Performance Committee, where FCPC had been assured of management's confidence that the affected staff could be redeployed elsewhere in the University.

During a lengthy and involved discussion, members considered the implications of withdrawing from the direct provision of student accommodation. The President and Vice-President of the Students' Association expressed concern that the move would disadvantage students by reducing access to affordable housing and were advised that other low-cost opportunities were available in the private sector. The Principal further noted that the University had already disposed of two other residences because of a lack of uptake. Members sought assurances that the University would be able to dispose of the properties, noting the potential risk posed by the buildings deteriorating further. Mr Weir advised Court that a tentative market analysis had been positive.

The Chair proposed a vote with the result that 13 members declared themselves in favour of the proposal and six against.

Court therefore accepted the recommendation to cease the direct provision of halls of residence.

23 HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

CT/1121/15

The Director of People & OD introduced the above annual report, which had received significant scrutiny at the Health & Safety Sub-Committee and at the People, Health & Equality Committee. Members were reminded of their responsibility as governors for the health & safety of staff, students, and other visitors to the University.

Court welcomed the report and the assurance it provided. Thereafter, Court approved the report and commended the Health & Safety Manager.

24 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2021

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 16, were received.

The following matter was approved:

24.1 Review of Financial Regulations

(paragraph 15 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee to approve the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations, submitted to Court as Enclosure 17. One member questioned whether this was part of the ongoing work to review the Scheme of Delegation and was advised that, whilst not specifically related, it was essential that the two reflected one another.

The following matters were noted:

24.2 Risk Management Update

(paragraph 8.1 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the regular update on risk management which represented the latest update on the strategic risk register as discussed by the Senior Management Team on 27 October.

24.3 Strategic Risk 5 Review

(paragraph 8.2 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a 'deep dive' report into strategic risk 5 "Disruption to University operations arising from major incident, omission, failure or external attack'. This review had been requested by the Committee, who had felt the risk was too broadly defined. Members noted the broad nature of the risk, required that it be broken down into its constituent parts and that future updates would be provided on an on-going basis.

24.4 Internal Audit 2020/2021: Follow-up Review of Cyber Security

(paragraph 9.1 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a follow-up review of Cyber Security which was conducted in July. The Committee had been advised that the significance of the original findings had been re-rated, taking into account the considerable progress made on the original report's recommendations.

- 24.5 Internal Audit 2020/2021: Review of IT Strategy & Infrastructure
(paragraph 9.2 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had received and considered an advisory report on IT Infrastructure & Strategy and was advised that the Committee had encouraged management to make more widespread use of this approach.
- 24.6 Internal Audit 2020/2021: Review of Partnerships Working
(paragraph 9.3 refers)
Court noted the Committee's consideration of a report on the review of partnerships working, which had reached an opinion of substantial assurance with only one low-risk recommendation.
- 24.7 Internal Audit 2020/2021: Follow-Up Report
(paragraph 9.4 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a follow-up report on outstanding historical recommendations from previous years. This was a significant piece of work, for which Governance and the Internal Auditors were to be commended with many legacy issues resolved.
- 24.8 Internal Audit 2020/2021: Annual Report
(paragraph 9.5 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the internal audit annual report, intended to provide members with a summary report of the year's internal audit activity.
- 24.9 Internal Audit Plan 2021/2022
(paragraph 10 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had considered the proposed plans for internal audit activity in the coming session. Court was further advised that the Head of Governance would circulate the revised plan to all other committees of Court to ensure that no area of responsibility be overlooked by a relevant or interested committee.
- 24.10 Cyber Security Update Report
(paragraph 11 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had received and considered an update report on progress made in implementing the recommendations of the review into Cyber Security. The Committee had taken considerable assurance from the significant progress made, particularly in relation to the cloud migration project.
- 24.11 Internal Audit: Management report on implementation of recommendations
(paragraph 12 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had considered a report intended to provide the Committee with a summary of the open and closed actions from the reviews conducted during 2020/2021.
- 24.12 Provisional External Audit Results
(paragraph 13 refers)
Court was advised that the Director of FICS had presented the provisional external audit results for the year ended 31 July 2021, noting that no issues of significance had been identified.

24.13 Value for Money Report 2020/2021
(paragraph 14 refers)
Court noted the Committee's consideration of the Value for Money report for 2020/2021, which had outlined the University's value framework and provided examples of VfM practice.

24.14 Business Resilience & Continuity Update
(paragraph 17 refers)
Court noted the Committee's consideration of a report on the considerable work undertaken on the Business Resilience and Continuity Project.

Thereafter, Court approved the minutes and commended the work of Governance officers.

25 FINANCE & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 02 NOVEMBER 2021

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 18, were approved. The following matter was approved:

25.1 Financial Update, including carry-forward proposal
(paragraph 8 refers)
Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee to approve the proposed carry forward of £810k of infrastructure improvement funding submitted to Court as Enclosure 19.

The following matters were noted:

25.2 Residences proposal
(paragraph 11 refers)
Court noted the Committee's recommendation to approve the proposal to withdraw from the direct provision of student residences, which had already received Court's consideration as a substantive agenda item.

25.4 Operational & Financial Planning 2021/2022 and 2023/2024
(paragraph 7 refers)
Court noted the Committee's consideration of the above operational planning update, intended to provide an update on student numbers for 2021/2022.

25.5 Capital Projects report
(paragraph 9 refers)
Court noted the Committee's consideration of the above report, which outlined the status and progress of approved capital projects, including the progress of the Kydd Building Level 5 Cladding Project.

25.6 Online Programme Management: summary business case
(paragraph 10 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had discussed a summary business case for a project to work with partners to offer delivery of University programmes beyond the Dundee campus. This proposal was intended to support the University's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 to increase non-SFC income and an options appraisal exercise had been undertaken. The Committee had broadly welcomed the approach proposed and

expected to remain apprised of future developments, including full business cases and detailed arrangements for project governance

25.7 Procurement matters

(paragraph 12 refers)

Court noted the Committee's approval of matters relating to procurement, including the procurement strategy 2021-2026, the annual procurement report for 2020 to 2021 and a proposal to make a direct award to the current provider of investment management services.

25.8 Procurement of new Pension Scheme

(paragraph 15 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received an update on progress made on the procurement of the new pension scheme.

Thereafter, Court approved the minutes.

26 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2021

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 20, were received. The following matter was approved:

26.1 Court Membership Update

(paragraph 10 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee to reappoint Ms Gameelah Ghafoor to the membership of Court.

The following matters were noted:

26.2 Review of the Effectiveness of Court

(paragraph 6 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had discussed and agreed the format for the review of the effectiveness of Court, which would take place during 2021/2022 and that an external facilitator was being sought.

99.3 Cladding Report Governance Review

(paragraph 9 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a document intended to provide reflection on the governance issues arising from the University's handling of reports to Court's committees and action relating to the existing cladding on the University estate. Dr Ingram advised members that the Committee had taken assurance from the identification of lessons learned in the report, which had also been discussed at the Chair's Committee.

In discussion, members questioned whether, in view of the wider governance concerns expressed by Court, it remained appropriate for the review of the effectiveness of Court to be 'light touch' in nature. Dr Ingram advised that these matters would be fed into the review and that the facilitator would ensure they were addressed. It was also noted that the facilitator would be expected to have conducted a detailed analysis of the papers and minutes of Court and its committees to identify other potential governance issues. Dr Ingram further noted that a lay member was required to join the working group charged with leading the Review and invited expressions of interest.

Thereafter, the above minutes were approved.

27 PEOPLE, HEALTH & EQUALITY COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2021

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 21, were received.

The following matters were approved:

27.1 Health & Safety Annual Report (paragraph 7 refers)

Court noted that the above Health & Safety Annual Report had already been considered and approved as a substantive agenda item.

27.2 Revised Staff Disciplinary Procedure (paragraph 15.1 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee to approve the Revised Staff Disciplinary Procedure, submitted as Enclosure 22.

27.3 Revised Code of Student Discipline: Non-Academic Misconduct (paragraph 17 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee to approve the Revised Code of Student Discipline: Non-Academic Misconduct, submitted as Enclosure 23. Members were advised that the Chancellor, having been Scotland's first Public Services Ombudsman, would submit comments on the Code and that any subsequent changes would be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

The following matters were noted:

27.4 Committee Remit and Membership (paragraph 5 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had discussed the current remit and membership of the Committee and felt that it warranted review to ensure that the delegated authority of the Committee was broadened and encompassed all relevant responsibilities. Members were advised that a further discussion would be scheduled.

27.5 Staff Engagement Survey (paragraph 8 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a proposal to conduct a tender exercise for a supplier for Staff Surveys and supplementary Pulse surveys.

27.6 Remote & Flexible Working Statement (paragraph 9 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of proposed amendments to the iterative remote and flexible working policy statement.

27.7 Future Pension Provision: update (paragraph 11 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received an update on the future of pension provision for support staff at the University.

27.8 Performance Management update

(paragraph 13 refers)
Court was advised that advised that members of Court had held an open and wide-ranging discussion with the Principal, the Vice-Principal (Strategy & Planning) and the Director of People & OD on performance management.

27.9 Sickness Absence Report

(paragraph 14 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a report on sickness absence.

27.10 Kydd Building Cladding and Fire Risk Management Update

(paragraph 19 refers)
Court noted the Committee's consideration of an update on progress made with the Kydd Building Phase 5 Cladding project and fire risk management, including historical cladding issues.

Thereafter, Court approved the minutes.

28 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE: REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2021

CT/1121/24

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 24 were received.

The following matters were noted:

28.1 Severance Arrangements: annual report

(paragraph 14 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the annual report on salaries in the discretionary range.

28.2 Severance Arrangements: individual cases

(paragraph 15 refers)
Court noted that the Committee had discussed individual salaries within the remit of the Committee and the use of benchmark data to inform the discussion.

Thereafter, Court approved the minutes.

29 STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION REPORT TO COURT

CT/1121/05

The President of the Abertay Students' Association (SA) introduced the above paper, intended to apprise Court of activities undertaken by the SA since September. Ms Thiel advised members that the SA had employed two Student Wellbeing Assistants and that 'Abertaysty', the initiative to provide students with free food, would be relaunched imminently.

Court noted that the SA was working with the University on a new Student Partnership Agreement and was collaborating with the Deputy Principal and the Dean of Teaching & Learning on the establishment of a 'Students as Partners' initiative. It was intended that this would incorporate the student voice across the University as co-collaborators and co-creators and the first meeting of the Board would take place in December.

Ms Thiel advised members of ongoing issues with room bookings, especially for student societies and noted that the SA and Mr Weir were exploring

alternative locations for the SA offices. The present space could not accommodate wheelchair users and lacked sufficient space for private discussions with students. Court was advised that waiting times for the counselling service had been raised as a concern but that cases were prioritised in order of severity and that the initial wait was, on average, one week. It was also planned that the Sabbatical Officers and the Student Wellbeing Assistants would receive training on dealing with distressed students.

Thereafter, Court thanked Ms Thiel and noted the report.

30 ACADEMIC MATTERS REPORT

CT/1121/06

The Deputy Principal introduced the above report on current academic business, which also included a summary of the business conducted by Senate at its last meeting in October 2021. Professor Bacon advised Court that, as had been suggested, she had categorised these activities in line with the core areas of the Strategic Plan.

In discussion, members commended the exhibition of some of the work undertaken by staff and students relating to environmental sustainability and arising from staff/student attendance as official Observer Delegates at the UN Blue zone at COP26. Court requested further presentations on Knowledge Transfer Partnerships to future meetings.

Thereafter, Court noted the report

31 DEPARTURE OF MEMBER

The Chair noted that this would be the last meeting of Court attended by Mr Gordon MacDougall, whose period of office would come to an end on 31 December 2021. On behalf of Court, Mr Shaw thanked Mr MacDougall for his contributions over the last nine years as a member of the People, Health & Equality Committee and, over the previous year as Court Intermediary. Court warmly endorsed Mr Shaw's comments.

Mr MacDougall thanked members for their good wishes and expressed his satisfaction at having seen the institution go from strength to strength. In particular, he thanked Professor Seaton, Mrs Stewart and Dr Ramsay for their support and advice.

32 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair intimated that a special meeting of Court to consider any recommendation from the Recruitment & Selection Panel would be arranged for the week commencing 24th January 2022.

Thereafter, no other business was declared. The Chair thanked members for their contributions and invited those in attendance to depart.

33 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Court noted that the date of the next scheduled meeting would be Wednesday 16th February 2022

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CHAIR