

Approved



## UNIVERSITY COURT

### MINUTES

of the meeting of the University Court held on 21 April 2018 at 2pm in the John Hogan Suite of the Carnoustie Golf Hotel.

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

Mr J Barnett  
Mr M Batho  
Mr J Burt  
Dr Y Deeni  
Ms G Ghafoor  
Dr M Hinfelaar

Dr A Ingram  
Ms V Lynch  
Professor S Olivier  
Mr C Rae  
Dr J Rees

Ms F Robertson  
Professor N Seaton  
Mr M Shaw  
Dr K Smith  
Mr T Wilson

Secretary: Mrs S Stewart  
Clerk to Court: Dr A Ramsay  
In attendance: Ms D Bandeva  
Mrs C Summers, Director of Strategic Planning  
Mr O Wright, observer

Court received apologies for absence from Mr H Aitken, Mr A Bailey, Mrs L Baxter, Mr M Grossi and Mr I McDonald.

### NON-RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

#### 72 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Mr Frizzell welcomed new members Mr John Barnett, Dr Annie Ingram, Ms Veronica Lynch and Ms Fiona Robertson to their first meeting of Court and welcomed Mr Hugh Aitken and Mr Andrew Bailey, *in absentia*. Finally, Mr Frizzell welcomed the incoming Students' Association Vice-President, Owen Wright, as an observer to the meeting.

#### 73 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 declared.

#### 74 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIR'S COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 APRIL 2018

Court noted the above minutes, submitted as Enclosure 41.

75 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2018

Court approved the above minutes, submitted as Enclosure 42, as an accurate record.

76 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

77 SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL (SFC): OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2018/19 – 2020/21

CT/0418/43

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the above final draft of the Outcome Agreement (OA) covering the period from academic session 2018/2019 to academic session 2020/2021. Mrs Summers advised Court that the paper had been through several iterations and had been subject to extensive consultation. She advised that the SFC had indicated its satisfaction with the final draft, but that it would remain subject to confirmation in May that the SFC final funding allocation for 2018/2019 was in line with expectations.

In discussion, the University's Gender Action Plan was welcomed but members noted that more required to be done to increase the number of women in senior posts. Management agreed that this would be discussed at a future meeting of Court. On a matter not directly relating to the paper under consideration, the Students' Association President requested that the University consider seeking accreditation as a living wage employer, since it already paid the living wage. The Principal advised that management had considered accreditation, but did not wish to give an external body the ability to constrain how the University rewarded its staff. The relative merits of accreditation were discussed at length and it was agreed that a paper would be produced for consideration by the People, Health & Equality Committee, which would consider this matter in the wider context of reward and remuneration.

Court noted the gender imbalance amongst certain student cohorts. The Director of Strategic Planning advised members that a number of initiatives were in place, including revisions to prerequisites for admission and the change of programme names to appeal to different constituencies. Widening access targets were identified as challenging and members sought assurances that the University was confident that it could meet its year-on-year targets. Mrs Summers responded that all indications were currently positive, with the caveat that Abertay was operating within a city where other institutions also had challenging targets. Although the proportion of widening access students remained static at 19%, this would require higher numbers of individuals as overall student numbers were up. Noting that the SFC had rejected proposals from other institutions in relation to widening access, Mrs Summers advised Court that it seemed probable that the Funding Council had taken account of the local context in agreeing Abertay's targets.

One member sought clarification of the availability of student work-placements and was advised that the University sought to provide all students with the opportunity for work-related learning.

Thereafter Court approved the Outcome Agreement with SFC for the period

2018/2019 to 2019/2020, subject to confirmation of the final funding allocation for 2018/2019.

78 QAA (SCOTLAND) ANNUAL DISCUSSION

CT/0418/44

The Vice-Principal (Academic) introduced the above report on the recent annual discussion with the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland). Professor Olivier advised Court that QAA (Scotland) sought annual reassurance that processes and academic standards remained robust; and that the most recent meeting had been, in his opinion, collegial and had been indicative of how Abertay had matured as an institution. Members noted that SEGi had been the principal matter under discussion and that the QAA had been satisfied with the assurance arrangements put in place for the teach-out of continuing students, including regular video-conferencing.

He also apprised Court that the University was undertaking a significant programme – co-ordinated by the Governance team in Academic Registry - of Institution-Led Review of all subjects following the curriculum reform undertaken in academic session 2015/2016.

Although the QAA had yet to submit its formal report to the University, Professor Olivier indicated his belief that QAA had been satisfied that the University's quality assurance and enhancement systems were robust but urged the University to maintain its vigilance in this area.

The Chair, on behalf of Court, thanked Professor Olivier for this report and noted that, following an analysis of the questions received from members in the morning session of the Conference, Court would have future discussions on the governance and mitigation of academic risk.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

79 SENATE REPORT

CT/0418/45

The Vice-Principal (Academic) introduced the above report, intended to provide Court with a summary of the matters discussed by Senate at its meeting in April 2018, including a robust and wide-ranging debate on the future vision of teaching & learning at the University. Professor Olivier expressed some disappointment that some members of Senate had appeared to meet the proposals with dissent without having participated in the seminars that had been open to all staff. He explained that the proposals were intended to allow staff the freedom to innovate in teaching practice through development of flexible learning spaces. A short-life working group had been established to address issues identified as part of the debate.

The member of Court who had attended Senate as an observer commended the standard of the debate, whilst noting that the focus of the debate had shifted somewhat from the overarching principles to specific requirements for teaching spaces.

Thereafter, Court noted the report and looked forward to receiving further updates in future.

80 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 APRIL 2018

CT/0418/46

Court received and considered the minutes of the above meeting, noting the Committee's consideration of progress made by management in the implementation of previously-agreed internal audit recommendations and a 6-monthly update on risk management.

Thereafter, Court approved the minutes of the meeting.

81 FINANCE & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2018

Court received and considered the minutes of the above inquorate meeting, submitted as Enclosure 47.

Members noted the Committee's consideration of the University Finance Report, which included an integrated view of the University's current financial position. Court was advised that the presentation delivered by the Director of Finance and Research Funding on the current position regarding pensions provision would be circulated for members' information.

Thereafter, Court was advised that the minutes would be homologated at the next meeting of the Committee.

81 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2018

CT/0418/48

Court received and considered the minutes of the above meeting. Court approved the following matters:

81.1 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance: update

(paragraph 26 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered an update on the University's implementation of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that staff and student members of Court should in principle be included as members of the Remuneration Committee, except where there would be a clear conflict of interest.

81.2 Periodic review of the effectiveness of Court: update on implementation of recommendations

(paragraph 27 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the implementation of recommendations that had arisen from the recent periodic review of the effectiveness of Court. In particular, members had discussed a paper on techniques and good practice in the effective chairing of committees and had agreed to recommend to Court that the paper be accepted and shared with all chairs of the committees of Court. Court approved the recommendation.

Thereafter, Court approved the minutes.

82 PEOPLE, HEALTH & EQUALITY COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 MARCH 2018

Court received and approved the minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 49.

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a report on the most recent meeting of the Joint Liaison Group where the main items of discussion had been harmonisation, staff engagement, GDPR and the most recent sickness absence report.

83 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2018

Court received and considered the minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 50.

83.1 Remit and Membership

(paragraph 15.1 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a recommendation that the Committee be separated into two committees: one to consider the Principal's salary and one for the other matters under the remit of the current Committee. This had been proposed in order to remove any perceived conflict of interest, notwithstanding the fact that the Principal was not a member of the existing Committee and did not attend when his own salary was being considered.

In discussion, members noted that Professor Seaton was only in attendance during those portions of Committee meetings where the salaries of the Vice-Principals and the University Secretary were considered or where other matters not relating to his salary were considered. Given Court's approval of the proposal that staff and student Court members could become members of the Remuneration Committee, members considered that this would enhance transparency without increasing bureaucracy.

Following consideration, Court agreed that the proposal was unnecessary and that both the conduct of the meetings and their minutes were robust and defensible.

Court therefore rejected the proposal.

83.2 Severance arrangements

(paragraph 12 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the annual report on severance arrangements. A query was raised regarding one matter arising from the report and it was agreed that this matter would be discussed with the Director of HR & Organisational Development and reported back to the member who raised the query.

83.3 Increase interaction between Court and Court committees and the wider University community

(paragraph 14 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a proposal from the Governance & Nominations Committee that the membership of the Remuneration Committee be extended (discussed and agreed earlier

in the meeting); and that the Committee should provide more extensive reports to Court in future.

Thereafter, Court approved the minutes.

84 DUNDEE ACADEMY OF SPORT: UPDATE

CT/0418/51

Court received and considered the above update on the status of Dundee Academy of Sport. Members expressed regret that the project was no longer sustainable and noted that efforts to secure philanthropic funding had been unsuccessful. In addition to seeking ongoing support from charities, the University had approached the local council and all local schools, but they had been unable to contribute to the future of the Academy.

In discussion, members noted the positive impact of the project and thanked all those who had been involved.

85 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION: UPDATE

CT/0418/52

The University Secretary introduced the above report on preparations for the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Mrs Stewart advised members that Court would receive periodic reports on progress.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

86 DEPARTURE OF MEMBER

The Chair noted that this would be the last meeting of Court for Professor Olivier, who would leave the University on 30 April 2018 to take up the post of Deputy Principal at the University of the West of Scotland. The Chair, on behalf of Court, thanked Professor Olivier for his enormous contribution to the University and noted the pivotal role he had played during a difficult time for the University and in its recent successes in the REF and TEF.

Court wished Professor Olivier every success for the future.

87 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted.

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**CHAIR**