

***Draft Subject to Approval by the University Court at the meeting of 10 June 2022*****UNIVERSITY COURT OF ST ANDREWS**

AT St Andrews on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of April 2022 AT A MEETING OF THE COURT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

**Present:** Dr Leyla Hussein, *Rector* (presiding); Professor Sally Mapstone, *Principal*; Professor Stuart Monro, *Acting Senior Lay Member*; Mr Adrian Greer *Deputy Chair of Court and Chancellor's Assessor*; Professor Lorna Milne, *Master of the United College and Deputy Principal*; Ms Stella Maris, *Rector's Assessor*; Mr Iain Anderson, Mr Jonathan Hewitt, *General Council Assessors*; Professor Mark Harris, Professor Sharon Ashbrook, and Dr Morven Shearer, *Senate Assessors*; Dr Lorna Dargan, *Non-Academic Staff Assessor*; Dr Malcolm Petrie, Mr Alex Duncan, *Trade Union Nominees*; Ms Lottie Doherty, *President, Students' Association*; Ms Leonie Malin, *Director of Education, Students' Association*; Mr Tim Allan, Ms Alison Johns, Mr Frank MacInnis, Ms Eve McCurrich, Professor Anu Ojha, Ms Jenny Stewart, *Non-executive Members*.

**In regular attendance:** Professor Brad MacKay, *Senior Vice-Principal International Strategy and External Relations*; Professor Tom Brown, *Vice-Principal Research and Innovation*; Mr Alastair Merrill, *Vice-Principal Governance*; Mr Derek Watson, *Quaestor and Factor*; Mr Andy Goor, *Chief Financial Officer*; Ms Ester Ruskuc, *Director of Strategy and Policy*, Ms Margaret Sinclair, *Executive Officer to the University Court and Senate*.

**In attendance (advisory capacity):** Mr Niall Scott, *Director of Corporate Communications*.

**Apologies:** Cllr Altany Craik, *Provost of Fife's Assessor*; Dr Derek Ball, *Senate Assessor*; Lord Duncan of Springbank, *Non-executive Member*; Professor Clare Peddie, *Vice-Principal Education (Proctor)*; Professor Katie Stevenson, *Vice-Principal Collections, Music and Digital Content*.

**PRELIMINARIES**

The Rector formally opened the meeting.

**WELCOME**

The Rector welcomed all attendees and noted apologies. Professor Stuart Monro attended the meeting in the capacity of Acting Senior Lay Member and Adrian Greer as the newly elected Deputy Chair of Court.

**STARRING OF ITEMS**

Members noted those items currently starred on the Agenda. No additional items were starred.

## **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were intimated.

### **I. OPENING BUSINESS**

#### **1. Meeting minutes**

##### **i) Minute of the Court Meeting held on 21 January 2022**

The minute of the Court meeting held on 21 January 2022 (on file, Minutes 2021-2022 No.2, pp 17-29) was agreed as a correct record.

#### **2. Noting of decisions reached by Correspondence**

Court received the paper (on file Court/21/60) which noted for the record the items circulated to Court for decision or noting during January to March 2022 (on file, Court/21/53-59).

#### **3. Matters Arising**

##### **i) Covid -19 Update**

The Vice-Principal Governance provided a verbal update on the University's activities to manage the Coronavirus pandemic and recent developments.

- The number of Covid cases reported in Fife remained high. Covid is now being treated as endemic in the population.
- The Covid Rapid Response Team continued to provide support and will remain operational until the end of the Semester.
- The Scottish Government published a new Strategic Framework on 22 February which set out the statement of intent – “to manage Covid 19 effectively, primarily through adaptations and health measures that will strengthen our resilience and recovery” and contained details of a new threat assessment framework based on prevalence and severity. Future plans will be based around 4 levels of threat – routine adaptations; baseline protective measures; targeted protective measures; and extensive protective measures. The current threat level was low.
- The last few remaining restrictions have been, or are about to be lifted: Test and Protect has been phased out, test sites closed and contact tracing abandoned. No further free LFD tests will be made available centrally, but the University will continue to provide LFD tests through the LFD Collect system until the end of the Semester (or until stocks run out if sooner).
- The legal requirements (face coverings, duty to have regard to Scottish Government guidance etc) have been lifted. The significance of the removal of this legal requirement was explained in detail in response to questions from Members: The University can no longer enforce mask wearing or make non-mask wearing a disciplinary matter. The majority of the University

population had been respectful and observant of the Covid Code, and there were no indications that this behaviour would change, and the University continued to encourage courteous and considerate behaviour around mask wearing.

- The Strategic Framework emphasised in-person teaching as the “appropriate and desirable position for most courses” and the Scottish Government had published a set of principles to assist HEIs in moving forward.

Court noted the update.

## ii) USS Update

The Reform package agreed by USS JNC had now been implemented as of 1 April, with contribution rates for members remaining at 9.8% and employers increasing to 21.4%. The most recent monthly snapshot report on the financial health of the scheme indicated an improved financial situation, including substantial drop in deficit. The USS Trustee had made it clear, however, that this in large part was as a direct result of the package of reforms implemented. Without these, contribution rates around 40% would be required, even assuming the level of covenant support that employers had agreed for the package of reforms.

It was hoped that work could now begin on the three workstreams that the University had lobbied to have included in the package of reforms – looking at scheme governance, conditional indexation, and low cost and flexible options. UCU had yet to confirm its willingness to participate in this work. The last of these workstreams was particularly important since the equality impact assessment that the University had conducted in January on the benefits reform package had highlighted the disproportionate effect that contribution increases as well as reductions in benefits would have on younger, early career and fixed term scheme members.

The current UCU mandate for industrial action ends on 3 May. UCU had rebaloted 146 institutions on pensions and pay and conditions. The 50% turnout threshold was met in 24/65 institutions balloted on pensions and in 36/141 on pay and conditions. This meant that there would be a strike and ASOS mandate beyond 3 May in 37/146 total institutions balloted. This compared with 68 at present. At St Andrews, the mandate had been extended by narrowest of margins – a 50.66% turnout for pay and 51.12% for pensions.

The University continued to provide information and updates to staff, and to endeavour to communicate in an effective but neutral way. The considerable, and continuing, impact of the disputes on staff morale was understood by the University which continued to work at a national and local level to influence discussion and approach, and to find creative ways to approach pay in the national negotiations.

In relation to staff morale, it was noted that the People survey had been completed at the end of December. Results were being analysed, and an update would be provided to the May meeting of PDAG and to Court in June.

### iii) Review of Race and Ethnicity

The Vice-Principal Governance introduced the paper (on file, Court/21/61) which updated Court on the progress of the review of race and ethnicity being conducted by SUMS Consultancy. Court noted the imminent finalisation of the review, the broad emerging themes and plans for detailed consideration.

## 4. Report from the Principal

### (i) Written

Court received the Principal's written report (on file, Court/21/62) which provided an update to Court on recent events, activities and general University news.

Court noted its contents.

### (ii) Verbal report and update

The Principal provided a verbal report to Court on a number of matters as detailed below.

**The Rector:** All were looking forward to the Rector's installation which would take place that afternoon.

**Senior Lay Member:** The Principal will host a party for Catherine Stihler on 8 June, to which all members have been warmly invited. Professor Stuart Monro took up appointment as Acting Senior Lay member on 15 April 2022.

**Philanthropy:** The Principal updated Court on her recent visit to the USA, and on the feedback and indications of support that had come from the various meetings and engagements, including significant philanthropic donations .

**Ukraine:** Scottish Government has announced that displaced Ukrainian students settling in Scotland will be given access to free tuition and living cost support, subject to parliamentary approval. Existing Ukrainian students who are experiencing hardship will be eligible to apply for immediate financial assistance through a newly created £1million international students emergency fund.

**HE Landscape:** The Principal highlighted the activity in the wider UK HE landscape which could have implications for the University including the new UKRI strategy; the pending Nurse review; the role out of the UK government levelling up strategy, including recent announcements on the shared prosperity fund; the roll out of the post-18 Augar review implications, and the Lifelong Loan entitlement; and more specifically in Scotland the continuing roll-out of the SFC

review implementation, the multi-year spending plans; and the REF results. The University had recently been visited by a number of UK and Scottish Government ministers (having recently hosted Jamie Hepburn, Alex Burghat and Iain Stewart, and soon to host Kate Forbes). These kind of engagements and the Principal's related roles with Universities Scotland and Universities UUK are central to ensuring that the University remained both informed and influential in the dynamic HE landscape

**Quality Assessment:** Professor Clare Peddie, Vice-Principal Education (Proctor) has been appointed as the first Deputy Chair of the UK standing Committee for Quality Assessment, a significant national role in this area.

The Principal answered questions from members on QS rankings; application and admissions; research applications (numbers and success rate), and level of engagement with UKRI and Research Councils.

## **5. Report from the Rector**

Court received the Rector's Report (on file, Court/21/63) which provided an update on Students' Association Activities and Rectorial Activities.

The Rector introduced the report, commenting on the insights she had gained during her engagement with students in the run-up to her installation. The Rector welcomed the University's systematic engagement of students in the development of strategy and policy – consulting students on all aspects of University business, and empowering them to speak up about issues of concern to them was very important to her. The Rector highlighted in this context the collaboration between Student Services and the Rector's Committee in developing the Do No Harm Framework which underlines Student Services commitment to ethical principles and to enhancements of communication, clarity and confidence in their interactions with the student community.

The Rector expressed her hope that that more could be done to improve the effectiveness of student representation on Court and beyond, and ways found to improve support structures. She welcomed the priority given to this in the discussion of the forthcoming Court Effectiveness Review at the March Governance and Nominations Committee.

The Rector explained that being based in Kenya, she was unable to engage in University business as much as she would wish, and paid tribute to the work of the Rector's Assessor in representing her in her absence.

In discussion, Court members welcomed opportunities to learn more about the student experience, whilst recognising that it was not a formal part of Court's constitutional remit. It was important to avoid generalisations, and to bear in mind that there was no single "student voice". The student population was a large community which experienced the University in different ways, including from both the undergraduate and postgraduate perspectives. The Student

Representatives could provide their perspective on the mood of the student body, based on their own engagement, contacts and personal experience and the University now had a Director of Student Experience, who was well placed to provide an overview.

Court noted the report.

#### **6. Strategy Refresh Update**

Court noted the paper (on file Court/21/64) which provided an update on the process of refreshing the University Strategy.

## **II. PARC BUSINESS**

#### **7. Minute of the Meeting held on 11 March 2022**

Members received the minute of the meeting (on file, Court/21/65).

#### **8. Projects for Approval**

The Quaestor presented the paper (on file, Court/21/66 (a, b and c)).

Court noted that PARC had, at its meeting of December, approved the requests for approval and funding as detailed in the paper relating to:

Court/21/66 a. - Main Library

Court/21/66 b - New College

Court noted the position of the Student Residences Albany Park Project as detailed in Court/21/66 c, and received a verbal update from the Quaestor on developments since the meeting of PARC, and ongoing negotiations with CLV. Court was assured that the attention of the Quaestor and PARC was acutely focused on this issue; the importance of the project; the potential ramifications and consequences of the delay; and the resulting need to develop alternative plans to address accommodation provision in the short and medium term. Court also noted concerns about affordability and the broad range of financial support available for students.

PARC would receive a further update at its forthcoming meeting.

#### **9. Projects for Information**

Court received the Projects for Information paper (on file, Court/21/67) which provided a summary of in-train and planned capital projects. The Appendices to the summary included updates on the following: - The Laidlaw Music Centre; Eden Campus Professional Services Relocation; BMS Reinstatement and

Modernisation; Eden Campus; Younger Hall Refurbishment; Learning and Teaching Commons Butts Wynd/OD Refurbishment; Purdie Labs 322-324; Bat Colony; St Andrews West; Grange Road; Student Residences – Gap Site 3; North Haugh Hub; Kenly Wind Farm; New North Haugh Building.

#### **10. Review of Infrastructure**

Court received the paper (on file, Court/21/68) presented for information. The paper provided details of the recent reviews of IT and state Infrastructure.

#### **11. Summary Financial report to 28 February 2022**

Members received the report (on file, Court/21/69) which provided a summary of the University's financial position as at 28 February 2022.

#### **12. Institutional Indicators Update**

Members noted the report (on file, Court/21/70) which contained the regular update on strategic performance indicators presented to PARC.

The DoSP agreed to respond to a Member's question on the detail of the KPI's (as they related to the Strategy) offline.

#### **13. Enabling Strategies Update**

Court noted the biannual update and annexed T-maps (on file, Court/21/71) which shared progress on the enabling strategies addressing People, Digital and Estate.

The Principal, in concluding discussion on the PARC agenda items, commented on the importance of considering these major items of core Court business in sufficient depth to ensure that Court members were fully discharging their obligations as Trustees. The Acting Senior Lay Member, Deputy Chair and Secretary would discuss the organisation and balance of future Court meetings to provide for this.

### **III DISCUSSION ITEM**

#### **14. The Post Pandemic Higher education Landscape**

The Master delivered a presentation on behalf of the Vice-Principal Education (Proctor), who was unable to attend due to illness.

This provided an overview of how the Higher Education landscape has changed and how the University was leading and influencing this change. The

presentation detailed changes and developments relating to Students; Schools; the University; HE sector in Scotland; HE sector in the UK; and internationally.

The presentation sparked discussion of teaching and learning approaches, and of contrasts between the HE and FE sectors.

Copies of the PowerPoint presentation will be placed on the Court Sharepoint site for information.

#### **IV REGULAR BUSINESS**

##### **15. Report on Ref Outcomes**

The Vice-Principal Research and Innovation presented the paper (on file, Court/21/72) that updated Court on post-REF submission activity and provided information on activities that the University will undertake around communicating the REF Results that will be made public on 12 May 2022.

Court noted the paper and the verbal update.

##### **16. Audit and Risk Committee**

Jonathan Hewitt, Convenor of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) presented the minutes of the ARC November meeting and summarised the main business considered at that meeting.

###### **(i) Minutes of the Meetings held on 10 February 2022**

Members noted the report of the meeting (on file, Court/21/73). The Convenor highlighted the progress that had been made by the Chief Information Officer and his team on Cyber Security, and the extensive and comprehensive report made to ARC that had shared the progress made.

###### **(ii) Update on Risk Register**

This paper (on file, Court/21/74) presented for information provided the quarterly risk report for Q1, 2022 (risk dashboard and narratives).

##### **17. Governance and Nominations Committee (G and N)**

Professor Stuart Monro (Convenor of G and N) presented the items of business forwarded to Court by G and N.

###### **i) Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022**

The minutes (on file, Court/21/75) were presented for information.



The Convenor explained the work being undertaken in relation to planning the Quinquennial review of Court Effectiveness.

Alison Johns will take the lead in organising the Court Effectiveness Review and she provided Court with an update on developing plans for the review; this is likely to have as one of its main themes the provision of appropriate support to student representatives on Court (this following the discussion of the paper submitted by the Rector's Assessor (on file, GN/21/15).

Initial scoping discussions with Court Members were planned for the coming weeks and an update will be provided to Governance and Nominations in May.

### **iii) Revised HSAG Remit**

Court noted the revisions to the HSAG remit, approved by G and N at its March meeting (on file, Court/21/76).

## **18. Court Office Business**

### **i) Notification of Appointment- Deputy Chair of Court**

Members noted the appointment of Adrian Greer to the post with effect from 15 April 2022 (on file, Court/21/77).

## **V ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

The Rector's Assessor explained to Court why she felt that Court should take a greater interest in student representation, and welcomed plans to consider the support provided to student representatives in the Court effectiveness review (see above).

## **VI DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Court will take place on Friday 10 June 2022 at 10 am in Upper College Hall.

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Dr Leyla Hussein, OBE, Rector (Presiding)

Margaret Sinclair,

Executive Officer to the University Court & Senate

Clerk to Court

April 2022.

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