

Draft Subject to Approval by the University Court at the meeting of 9 June 2023**UNIVERSITY COURT OF ST ANDREWS****AT St Andrews on the 14th DAY OF APRIL 2023 AT A MEETING OF THE COURT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS**

Present: Professor Stuart Monro, *Acting Senior Lay Member* (presiding); Professor Dame Sally Mapstone, *Principal*; Professor Brad MacKay, *Deputy Principal*; Adrian Greer, *Deputy Chair of Court and Chancellor's Assessor*; Stella Maris, *Rector's Assessor*; Jonathan Hewitt, *General Council Assessor*; Cllr Robin Lawson, *Provost of Fife's Assessor*; Dr Morven Shearer, *Senate Assessor*; Dr Lorna Dargan, *Non-Academic Staff Assessor*; Dr Malcolm Petrie, *Trade Union Nominee*; Juan Rodriguez, *President of the Students' Association*; AK Schott, *Director of Education Students' Association*; Tim Allan, Alison Johns, Ros King, Frank MacInnis, Eve McCurrich, Professor Ewan McKendrick, Jenny Stewart, *Non-executive Members of Court*.

In regular attendance: Derek Watson, *Quaestor and Factor*; Alastair Merrill, *Vice-Principal Governance*; Professor Tom Brown, *Vice-Principal (Research, Collections, and Innovation)*; Professor Monique MacKenzie, *Vice-Principal (Digital Education, Research, and Environment)*; Dr Rebekah Widdowfield, *Vice-Principal (People and Diversity)*; Ester Ruskuc, *Vice-Principal (Strategy, Policy, and Planning)*; Niall Scott, *Vice-Principal (Communications)*.

In attendance (observer): Ray Perman, *Senior Lay Member (Elect)*.

Apologies: Dr Leyla Hussein, *Rector*; Iain Anderson, *General Council Assessor*; Professor Sharon Ashbrook, Professor Catherine O'Leary, Dr Stephen Tyre, *Senate Assessors*; Alex Duncan, *Trade Union Nominee*; Professor Anu Ojha *Non-executive Member*; Professor Ineke De Moortel, *Master of the United College*.

PRELIMINARIES

The Acting Senior Lay Member formally opened the meeting.

WELCOME

The Acting Senior Lay Member welcomed all attendees and observers and noted apologies.

Professor Ewan McKendrick attended his first meeting of Court as a Non-executive Member, and Professor Brad MacKay attended his first meeting as a Member of Court in his capacity as Deputy Principal.

STARRING OF ITEMS

Members noted those items currently starred on the Agenda.

PARC item 12 - SFC Outcome Agreement was additionally starred at the request of a member.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Tim Allan declared an interest as an investor in Eden Mill.

I MINUTES OF MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

i). Meeting Minutes and Matters Arising

i) Minute of the Court Meeting held on 20 January 2023

The minute of the Court meeting held on 20 January 2023 (on file, Minutes 2022-2023 No.2, pp18-28) was agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

i) Pay, Pensions and Industrial Action update

The Vice-Principal (Governance) provided a verbal update on developments since the October meeting of Court.

- The Principal's report contained a detailed update on the shifting sands of the pay and pensions disputes. Since the report was published, UCU had commenced formal consultation of members on the two sets of proposals, recommending that the pensions proposals were "noted" but that pay and conditions proposals were rejected.
- The consultation ran until 10am on Monday 17 April and results would be reported to UCU Special HE sector committee meeting on Wednesday 19 April, the day before the marking and assessment boycott (MAB) was due to come into effect on Thursday 20 April.
- If members voted to "note" both proposals, it was likely that the MAB would be cancelled; but if members rejected at least one proposal, it was probable that the MAB would come into effect in relation to that dispute.
- The Proctor and President and Director of Education of the Students' Association had issued a joint message on 13 April to all students (CC'd to University Staff) to provide reassurance to students, detailing the various measures that were in hand to mitigate any impact that industrial action might have. In particular, the message provided reassurance that every student who has completed their degree will be able to graduate as normal in June. A copy of that message would be placed on the Court Sharepoint site for information.
- The University continued to maintain dialogue with the campus trade unions through the local joint negotiation committee, and to hope for an early and lasting resolution to these long-running disputes.

II PRINCIPAL'S BUSINESS

3. Report from the Principal

i) Written

Court received the Principal's written report (on file, COURT/22/46) which provided an update to Court on recent events, activities and general University news.

ii) **Verbal report and update**

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

- **Funding - Paragraph 107-** The SFC indicative allocations to universities for 2023/2024, expected on 28 March, had been released on 13 April. The Principal gave details of some headline figures including the reduction of the overall Capital Maintenance Grant for the HE Sector by 77.4% (76.9% for St Andrews), and on the implications of the indicative allocations for the University. These had resulted in a small uplift in the main teaching grant of 0.6%, and research funding; with an increase in the REG grant of 0.3%, and the RPG grant of 10.9%. Additionally, the SFC had opted to use the entire £5.5m uplift in the research and innovation budget from the Scottish Government to increase the overall size of the University Innovation Fund (UIF), resulting in an uplift of 34.9% in the University's strategic funding from the UIF. Overall, on the basis of the indicative allocations announced, the University had seen a net increase of 1.25%. This had been slightly more positive than expected. However, the flat cash position remained, and the Principal stood by her recent comments reported in the press that the sector was in a state of managed decline
- **Fundraising** continued to be crucial, and due diligence on a significant philanthropic donation was underway.
- **Accommodation** - There had been useful discussion both at PARC and at the pre-Court dinner relating to the Albany Park project. The importance of providing beds and balancing accommodation provision with affordability was understood. More beds had been sourced in Dundee and Leuchars for next year, and the recently launched tracking app for student seeking accommodation would be a useful tool to optimise availability and allocation.
- **AI** – The Vice-Principal Education (Proctor) and her team were engaged in considering the implications for teaching and assessment of the development of AI vehicles.
- **Golf** – St Andrews golf scholars (both women and men) were to be congratulated on their success in the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Golf Championship, successfully defending their titles for the first time in the history of the event.
- **Sands Film Festival** – The second Sands Festival was being held this month, with Joe Russo and Stanley Tucci being welcomed to the town.

The Principal requested that Court note her appointment as President Elect of Universities UK. Court congratulated the Principal on her UUK appointment.

Comments and questions for members related to the SFC funding allocations; progress on Horizon Europe; the potential impact of the change in format of the NSS survey; and the work being undertaken in the University around the implications of AI and ChatGPT. In relation to this, the Vice-Principal Education

(Proctor) confirmed that immediate steps had been taken to amend the Good Academic Practice Policy to ensure that inappropriate use of AI vehicles would be classed as academic misconduct. Additionally, work was ongoing across the University, under the auspices of the Community for Evidence-Led Practice in Education (CELPiE) to consider the implications of developments in this fast-moving area, with a view to issuing a guidance document for all academic staff on how to develop teaching and assessment to take account, both of the challenges posed, and opportunities afforded by these innovations. The existence of AI also required thought to be given to the value of the human contribution to education, and to consider and develop innovative assessment practices appropriate to the new technological landscape. A briefing would be provided to a future meeting of Court and, as appropriate, ARC when this work had reached a suitable stage of maturity

III PARC BUSINESS

4. Minute of the Meeting held on 10 March 2023

Members received the minute of the meeting (on file, COURT/22/47). It was noted that the draft minute would be amended before approval at the PARC meeting in May to clarify the informal nature of the temporary groups whose establishment had been previously approved by Court to advise PARC on specific issues. These were a valuable tool for drawing flexibly on the talent and expertise of all Court lay members but had no decision making or approval powers. Any approvals required for projects would be sought through the usual channels: by correspondence if between Court meetings, and via the Extraordinary Committee of Court if during the Summer vacation period.

5. Projects for Approval

Court received the paper (on file, COURT/22/48) which provided an overview of the project for approval - Nature Based Solutions which presented proposals (i) for the strategic case for the University to invest in nature-based solutions to achieve the objectives set out in the University Strategy for Sustainable St Andrews and (ii) for an initial investment in partnership with the Corrou Estate.

Court noted that there had been extensive and vigorous discussion of this at the PARC meeting following which PARC had approved the proposals and the initial investment in partnership with the Corrou Estate.

The Quaestor provided a brief outline of the key issues considered and points discussed, including the need for the University to take action in this area, and to provide leadership; the opportunities presented by the partnership; and in particular the importance of the potential benefit to research afforded by the establishment of the research station (which had been agreed as part of the venture). The value to research afforded by the project was underlined by the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections, and Innovation).

Other options would continue to be considered alongside the development of the Corrou project, including the potential for carbon sequestration projects outside Scotland, but there was strong feeling that the first steps to achieve solutions to offset the University's carbon footprint should be taken close to home, and evidence the University's willingness to address the net zero challenge by finding innovative and constructive solutions.

Members noted the discussion at PARC, and the thoroughness with which the proposal had been scrutinised in that committee. Notwithstanding this, it was important that Court was kept sighted on the project and its development, and that Court members appreciated that this was a high-risk project.

Questions asked by members focused on risk; the monitoring of the project and outcomes; the role of ARC in relation to understanding and monitoring the risk associated with the project; the benefit to research; the importance of this issue generally to the student body; the reputational benefits of being seen to take action and lead the field; and the other options for carbon offsetting being considered.

As a general point, it was observed that the University's strategy set out in para 4. of the paper "*to reduce consumption, reuse where we can, and offset our unavoidable carbon emission*" had to be balanced by Court and the Executive with their overriding fiduciary duties to the Institution. When considering feasible options, a balance had to be struck between these duties and the need to offset the carbon footprint, including being clear on what constituted unavoidable carbon emissions.

Court noted that the approval of PARC would be sought on the contractual arrangements with Corrou which were now being negotiated with delegated authority by the Quaestor, and that PARC would receive a further update on the project at its meeting in May.

6. Projects for Information

Court received the Projects for Information paper (on file, COURT/22/49) which provided a summary of in-train and planned capital projects. The Appendices to the summary included updates on the following projects:

Post Completion

BMS; Younger Hall; Learning and Teaching Commons-Butts Wynd/LOUD Refurbishment; Purdie Labs 3222-324.

Under Construction

Eden Campus; St Andrews West; Grange Road; Main Library; Grange.

Working to FBC

Student Residences – Gap Site 3; North Haugh Hub; Albany Park.

Court noted the update received on the progress of the Albany Park project and the current state of negotiations with CLV. Work continued to negotiate and sign a set of Heads of Terms, and to develop an outline business case which would come to PARC and Court in due course (hopefully to PARC in September

and Court in October). PARC would receive a further update on the progress of the project at its meeting in May. Members commended the Quaestor and his team on achieving the current improved position.

Working to OBC

Kenly Wind Farm; New North Haugh Building; New College; North Haugh Campus Development Framework; Eden Campus Enterprise Centre.

7. Review of Infrastructure

Court received the reports on (i) the University's ICT infrastructure; and (ii) on University Estate Infrastructure presented for information (on file, COURT/22/50).

8. Enabling Strategies Update

Court received the biannual update (on file, COURT/22/51) on the Enabling strategies to advance the new University Strategy 2022-2027.

9. Summary Financial Report to 31 January 2023

Court noted the summary of the University's financial position as at 31 January 2023 (on file, COURT/22/52).

10. Capital Plan

Court received the paper (on file, COURT/22/53) which outlined the Capital Plan. The paper brought together various strands of work (master planning; requirements of the academic agenda; level of professional resource required to ensure deliverability, and funding) relating to the scale of the University's capital investment needs over the coming decade. The paper presented a 10-year picture, with the phasing of work covering the 10-year plan plus an additional 5 years to reflect the long-term nature of need.

The Deputy Principal presented the paper and provided an overview of the avowedly ambitious plan, and of its rationale and priorities. Court endorsed the ambition and scope of the plan and noted (i) that PARC would continue to be involved to oversee the development of the plan and related projects; and (ii) that a communication strategy would be developed around the plans which would be used to inform all stakeholders.

11. Institutional Indicators Update

Court noted the paper (on file, COURT/22/54) which provided the routine summary of institutional performance against agreed KPIs. A correction to the paper was also noted for the record.¹ The clarity and ease of reference of the information presented was complimented. It was noted that specific questions on the detail of the KPIs could be directed to the Vice-Principal Strategy, Policy, and Planning offline.

¹ In Appendix 1, under 1.4 (p165 in the Court meeting pack) the reference to Graduate Outcomes data as being below the Russell Group median, should be above. Q2 data actually shows that the University is 2.6% above the Russell Group median.

12. SFC Outcome Agreement

The Draft SFC Outcome Agreement 2022-2023 (on file, COURT/22/55) was presented and approved for submission to the SFC. Court was reminded that the format of the report (including how the information was presented, and what information was included) was as required by the SFC. This limited the University in terms of style and content.

IV DISCUSSION ITEM

13. Development of Digital PGTs

The Vice-Principal (Digital Education, Research, and Environment) delivered a presentation on the work underway to develop Digital Postgraduate Taught programmes, updating Court on developments since the Court Away Day in September 2022.

The presentation covered digital transformation at St Andrews; market analysis: reaching new audiences; digital education in practice; the design of programmes different in content, structure and delivery to in-person programmes, and which are personalised, flexible connected and sought after. Information about the current pilot programmes was also provided with a demonstration of some of the innovative teaching methods, resources and techniques being used to deliver content.

Questions raised in discussion related to market analysis and marketing; fee profile; accreditation; governance; accessibility; and student support. It was confirmed that the importance of reflecting the University's core values and retaining a sense of place in the online space was fundamental to the thinking behind the development of the offerings.

The Principal commended the Vice-Principal (Digital Education, Research, and Environment) on her excellent presentation which underlined the focus on developing programmes of value and quality. The importance of Digital had been reflected in its becoming a theme in the Strategy. The University wanted to own the development of the digital programme, to ensure that it had an identity which was commensurate with the values and quality of the institution as a whole.

The slides from the presentation have been placed on the Court Sharepoint site.

V REPORTS

14. Student Members' Report

Court received the report from the Student Members of Court (on file, COURT/22/56). The President of the Students' Association presented the report with contributions from the Director of Education. The launch of the Students' Association Strategic Plan 2023-2027 was highlighted, and Court noted that a more detailed presentation would be given on this at its June meeting. The results of the recent student representative elections, and the work underway to plan for the forthcoming Rectorial election were also touched upon, as were the ongoing initiatives to address the cost-of-living crisis.

The Director of Education referenced the recent SA education fora, at which the main issues raised had related to the academic calendar and its effect on students, as well as extensions and increases in requests for these. The Vice-Principal Education (Proctor) confirmed that the University was aware of these issues, and work was underway to consider and address these concerns.

15. Audit and Risk Committee

The Convenor of ARC presented the main items of business forwarded to Court by ARC.

i) [Minute of the meeting held on 16 February 2023](#)

Court noted the report of the meeting on 16 February 2023 (on file, COURT/22/57). The Convenor highlighted the EARIAG annual report; the usefulness of the Internal Audit progress status update; the outcome of the Internal Audit on endowment funding; and the discussion by the Committee around risk and the risk register (see also (iii) below).

ii) [Annual Report of the Ethics and Research Integrity Assurance Group \(EARIAG\)](#)

Court noted the report of EARIAG (on file, COURT/22/58) presented to, and approved by, ARC at its February meeting. Court noted the report and the annual statement from the Research Integrity Committee that will be placed online, and made publicly available, as required for compliance with the Concordat to support Research Integrity.

iii) [Risk Management Update](#)

The risk management update (on file, COURT/22/59) was presented for information. The Convenor of ARC highlighted the discussions during the ARC meeting around cyber security; funding; and inflationary pressures.

Questions from members related to research income; recruitment and retention; and mandatory training.

Court also received a brief update from the convenor of the Health and Safety Assurance Group (HSAG) on that group's recent site visit to the new facilities at Eden Campus and praising the professionalism of the work ongoing to meet the complex, varied and sophisticated health and safety challenges these posed.

16. Governance and Nominations Committee

The Acting Senior Lay Member as Convenor of G and N presented the following updates on G and N business.

i) Minute of the meeting of 31 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2023 (on file, COURT/22/60) were homologated by Court. Court noted the appointment of Professor Ewan McKendrick to ARC, and the extension of Professor Catherine O'Leary as Senate Assessor.

ii) Rules and procedures for the Rectorial Election

Court noted (i) the paper (on file, COURT/22/61) provided for information; and (ii) that Senate will be invited formally to approve the arrangements for the Rectorial Election at its May meeting.

iii) Administration – Use of Court Sharepoint Site

Court noted the paper (on file, COURT/22/62) and the new arrangements for the circulation of papers that will be put into effect from the start of the new academic year.

iv) Restructure of the Students' Association

Court noted the paper (on file, COURT/22/63) which provide an update on the proposals to restructure the Students' Association to alter its structure from being a conventional Scottish registered charity with individual trustees to one with a single corporate trustee of which the trustees are directors. Court approved the final proposals, the new Constitution and the Articles of Association.

VI COURT AND SENATE OFFICE BUSINESS

17. Court and Senate Office Business

i) Court Effectiveness Review

Alison Johns (Non-executive member of Court) introduced the paper (on file, COURT/22/64) which presented the Court Effectiveness Review (CER) - draft report. The draft report detailed the draft findings and recommendations of the quinquennial CER conducted by Alison Johns, and independently assessed by Gillian Camm DL. The report highlighted a number of improvements that had already been made as a result of the first phase of the review the previous summer.

Members welcomed the report, and the rich range of issues addressed. Initial comments from members related to the scope of current Court Committees, and how to amplify the role of Court in supporting the Executive and University to achieve goals, and to identify and face developing challenges

In discussion, the question of dissemination of the report was raised and specifically, whether it could be used to assist to explain the role and purpose of Court. It was confirmed that the report would be developed to be accessible to a number of audiences and, once finalised, would include a set of key messages, which could be used to inform stakeholders.

Court noted (i) the draft report; (ii) the opportunity afforded for feedback and comment; and (iii) next steps. It was also noted that the final report to be presented to Court would include an executive summary along with a summary of recommendations.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Court will take place on Friday 9 June 2023 at 10am in Upper College Hall.

Court Office Draft 20 April 2023