

**UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE****UNIVERSITY COURT**

A meeting of the University Court was held on 9 December 2019.

Present: Ronnie Bowie (in the Chair);  
Janice Aitken;  
Alan Bainbridge (by telephone item 33(1)-33(3));  
Richard Bint;  
William Boyd;  
Catherine Cavanagh;  
Rumana Kapadia;  
Professor Lynn Kilbride;  
Rebecca Leiper;  
Bernadette Malone;  
Jane Marshall;  
Dr David Martin;  
Karen Reid;  
Jay Surti (by SKYPE);  
Professor Mairi Scott (Items 31- 33(1), by SKYPE);  
Sharon Sweeney; and  
Keith Winter (by telephone).

In Attendance: Wendy Alexander (Vice-Principal (International));  
Professor Blair Grubb (Vice-Principal (Education));  
Dr Neale Laker (Director of Academic & Corporate Governance) (Secretary to Court for the meeting);  
Dr Jim McGeorge (University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer);  
Dr Christine Milburn (Policy Officer (Corporate Governance));  
Pam Milne (Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development);  
Carol Prokopyszyn (Director of Finance);  
Professor John Rowan (Vice-Principal (Research, Knowledge Exchange & Wider Impact)); and  
Thomas Veit (Director of External Relations).

Apologies: Lord Provost Ian Borthwick;  
Shirley Campbell;  
Lady Lynda Clark;  
Josh Connor (DUSA President);  
Professor Nic Beech (Vice-Principal (Provost)); and  
Wesley Rennison (Director of Strategic Planning).

**32. RESIGNATION OF THE VICE-PRINCIPAL (PROVOST)**

The Court formally noted the resignation of the Vice-Principal (Provost), Professor Nic Beech, following his appointment as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Middlesex. Members asked that their congratulations be offered to Professor Beech, along with their gratitude for his service and contribution to the University. The Court noted that Professor Beech would leave the University at the end of January 2020 and would continue to work with the University

Executive Group (UEG) in the meantime and hand over business in a manner which would ensure that momentum was not lost in key areas of his responsibility.

**The Court decided:** to thank Professor Beech for his contributions and wish him well for the future.

### 33. MINUTES

The Court noted an extract of the draft minute from the meeting of the Court on 19 November 2019, which detailed previous discussions of relevance to the matters included on the agenda. Members noted that the extract had been provided for information and would be submitted for approval at the next full meeting of the Court.

**The Court decided:** to note the extract.

### 34. UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

The Court received a paper which had been drafted by the University Executive Group (UEG), with input from the Deans' Group, to provide context for the discussion of arrangements for the positions of Principal & Vice-Chancellor (interim and permanent positions) and Vice-Principal (Academic Planning & Performance) (interim and permanent positions). The paper summarised issues for consideration in relation to each of these appointments, including the respective timelines.

The Court noted that following the resignation of the Vice-Principal (Provost), the UEG had reached the view that the collective leadership model discussed at the previous meeting should not be pursued. In relation to the Vice-Principal vacancy, the Court also noted and discussed the management of the Deans of schools. In this respect the Court indicated that the role should be focussed around the principles it had approved in 2015, with the title for the Vice-Principal role returning to Vice-Principal (Academic Planning & Performance). In particular the Court was supportive of the proposal to enhance collaborative working between the UEG and Deans' Group and noted steps already taken in this respect. Members suggested that they would find a further update on this aspect useful following the joint away day between the UEG and the Deans later in December.

**The Court decided:** to note the paper

#### (1) Appointment of a Principal (Permanent Appointment)

The Court considered a paper which proposed mechanisms and timeframes for the appointment of a permanent Principal. With regard to the timeline, the Court was satisfied that it took into account previous discussions regarding the acceleration of the process and members sought assurance that the time scales would be adhered to as much as possible. The Court was however keen to ensure that the accelerated timeframe did not exclude any stakeholder groups from participation in the process. Members also noted that the University would be in competition with a small number of other Universities who would be seeking to recruit a Principal & Vice-Chancellor within the same timeframe.

Through discussion the Court indicated that it was largely satisfied that the previous appointment process had been robust and well managed. Members were supportive of proposed enhancements, including the extension of candidate visits. The Court also noted that it would be normal practice to use a search agency to support the process. The Court agreed that the Chair and Deputy Chair of Court (with the support of officers) should be asked to consider the reengagement of the agency previously used. The Court was also minded to recommend to the Appointing Committee that it engage a second agency to provide independent assessment centre/psychometric testing analysis and due diligence to further inform the Appointing Committee in making its recommendation to the Court.

Turning to the composition of the Appointing Committee, the Court indicated that the proposed membership should be developed in a flexible manner to ensure diversity. In particular, members suggested that there should be representation from professional services staff as well as academic staff within the membership of the Committee. Noting that the Committee was already quite large, members agreed that the size could be increased by up to a maximum of 2 further members. The Court also supported the inclusion of an external adviser to the panel.

Following the discussion of matters relating to the proposed consultation with staff and students, the Chair of Court confirmed that there would be further discussion with the Court if the outcomes were to significantly differ from those of the previous consultation.

In reviewing the further particulars previously used, members suggested a number of areas which should be updated and enhanced, including the prioritisation of leadership skills, momentum, values, and morale, as well as the specific challenges faced by the University.

Turning to remuneration, the Court agreed that the Remuneration Committee should be asked to consider the parameters for the appointment and to provide guidance informed by benchmarking;

- The Court decided:**
- (i) to delegate authority to the Chair and Deputy Chair of Court to finalise the composition of the appointing panel within the parameters discussed, subject to its ratification by the Governance & Nominations Committee;
  - (ii) to delegate authority to the Chair of Court, with support from the Deputy Chair of Court and officers, to appoint a search agency to support the process and a further agency to undertake due diligence, psychometric testing and assessment centre analysis on behalf of the appointing panel;

- (iii) to delegate authority to the Appointing Committee for the finalisation of the further particulars and advertisement.

(2) Appointment of a Principal (Interim Appointment)

The Court considered a paper which proposed mechanisms and timeframes for the appointment of an interim Principal. The Court was supportive of the approach and timelines suggested but suggested that consideration be given to the composition of the Appointing Committee in line with discussions in Minute 33(1) above to ensure diversity amongst the staff groups represented.

The Court highlighted the importance of providing candidates with clarity in relation to the remit and expectations of the interim role. In this regard members highlighted the importance of maintaining momentum and morale and addressing the financial challenges facing the University. Members also noted that the duration of the appointment would depend on that for the appointment of a permanent Principal and recommended that the Appointing Committee be made aware of risks in this regard. The Court also highlighted the importance of the candidates having the right skills and approach as well as credibility with staff and students. Members however indicated that an academic profile would be less crucial for the interim appointment, especially given the strength of academic leadership amongst the Vice-Principals, Deans' Group and senior professors.

The Court agreed that the position should be internally and externally advertised and approved the use of the further particulars previously used, subject to minor update to focus the role on meeting the challenges faced by the University.

- The Court decided:**
- (i) to delegate authority to the Chair and Deputy Chair of Court to finalise the composition of the appointing panel within the parameters discussed, subject to its ratification by the Governance & Nominations Committee;
  - (ii) to approve the use of the previous job description, subject to minor update;
  - (iii) to delegate authority to the Chair of Court to approach search agencies to support the identification of potential candidates;
  - (iv) to delegate authority to the Appointing Committee to take forward the appointing process, including due diligence, and bring forward a single candidate for appointment; and

- (v) to delegate the finalisation of the terms and conditions of the interim appointment to the Remuneration Committee.

(3) Appointment of a Vice-Principal (Interim Appointment)

The Court considered a paper which set out a proposed process for the appointment of an interim Vice-Principal to succeed Professor Nic Beech. The Court confirmed its support for the proposal that the appointment take place after the appointment of an interim Principal to enable them to participate in the selection process. The Court also supported the proposal that a permanent appointment be deferred until after the appointment of a permanent Principal to provide the incoming permanent Principal the opportunity to influence the shape and dynamic of their senior team.

The Court recommended that the position be advertised internally in the first instance and confirmed that the job description and title approved by the Court in 2015 remained fit for purpose. Members highlighted the opportunity for the appointment to positively influence the working relationship between the University Executive Group (UEG) and Deans' Group, as well as the importance of ensuring that the accountability of Deans for targets and objectives were met and were consistent with those of the University.

**The Court decided:**

- (i) to delegate authority to the Chair and Deputy Chair of Court to finalise the composition of the appointing panel within the parameters discussed, subject to its ratification by the Governance & Nominations Committee;
- (ii) to approve the use of the previous job description, subject to minor update;
- (iii) to advertise the role internally in the first instance;
- (iv) to delegate authority to the Appointing Committee to make an appointment, subject to it being reported to the Senate and the Court; and
- (v) to delegate the finalisation of the terms and conditions of the interim appointment to the Remuneration Committee.

Ronald Bowie  
Chair of Court