

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

A meeting of the University Court was held on 27 April 2021 by video conference.

Present: Ronnie Bowie (in the Chair);  
Janice Aitken;  
Alan Bainbridge;  
Tricia Bey;  
Richard Bint;  
Dr William Boyd;  
Lady Lynda Clark;  
Professor Iain Gillespie (Principal & Vice-Chancellor);  
Professor Lynn Kilbride;  
Rebecca Leiper;  
Bernadette Malone;  
Jane Marshall;  
Dr David Martin;  
Marianne Reilly;  
Professor Mairi Scott;  
Jay Surti;  
Sharon Sweeney;  
Karen Thomson; and  
Keith Winter.

In Attendance: Andrew Lothian (Member of the Court from 1 August 2021);  
Wendy Alexander (Vice-Principal (International));  
Professor Julian Blow (Interim Vice-Principal (Academic Planning & Performance));  
Professor Blair Grubb (Vice-Principal (Education));  
Roddy Isles (Head of Corporate Communication);  
Dr Neale Laker (Director of Academic & Corporate Governance);  
Dr Jim McGeorge (University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer);  
Dr Christine Milburn (Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance));  
Pam Milne (Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development);  
Carol Prokopyszyn (Director of Finance);  
Wesley Rennison (Director of Strategic Planning);  
Professor John Rowan (Vice-Principal (Research, Knowledge Exchange & Wider Impact)); and  
Thomas Veit (Director of External Relations).

Apologies: Lord Provost Ian Borthwick;  
David Dorward;  
Gigi (Jia Hui) Gan;  
Ron Mobed (with the exception of items 38-41); and  
Scott Quinn (DUSA President).

Prior to the start of the meeting members attended a briefing session at which the Principal outlined work undertaken by the University Executive Group (UEG) to develop a set of closely defined priorities which would underpin work toward reaching a sustainable financial position and provide a foundation for the development of the next University strategy and associated excellence agenda.

The three priorities identified by the UEG were: Academic Excellence & Sustainability; Growing Recruitment; and a Digitally Enabled University. Members noted the relationship of the three priorities to the previous set of eight. Through discussion members noted that the UEG continued to develop the enabling elements underpinning these priorities and strongly agreed that environmental sustainability should be prominent in both the delivery of the priorities and the development of the next University Strategy. The Court went on to explore plans for the communication and sharing of the priorities. Finally, members discussed what the future digital requirements of the University might be and were pleased to note the focus on the development of staff and the University community as well as on systems and equipment.

The University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer (University Secretary) outlined the early thinking of the UEG in relation to the development of the University strategy beyond 2022. He set out the intended process, timelines, and a small number of questions where early guidance from the Court would be helpful in developing materials for the Court strategy session scheduled for 24 May 2021. Noting that a formal paper had been provided for consideration at the meeting later that day (see also minute 57), the Court was supportive of the early thoughts presented. Agility and flexibility were highlighted as essential attributes for the next strategy and the Court noted that consultation would be a core element to its development. The University Secretary drew attention to the proposed timeline and touch points within the process to develop the next University Strategy, and discussions focussed on the importance of establishing the University's identity and direction of travel.

#### 54. MINUTES

**The Court decided:** to approve the minutes of the Court meeting on 23 February 2021.

#### 55. MATTERS ARISING

##### (1) Action Log

The Court received the action log of Court business. The Director of Strategic Planning welcomed feedback on the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) data provided to the Court as an appendix to the agenda for the meeting.

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

#### 56. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE & SUSTAINABILITY: UPDATE

The Court considered an update on progress within the Academic Excellence and Sustainability (AES) programme. The Principal drew members' attention to the change of focus from structure to sustainability, and therefore the change in name. The paper set out future touchpoints for the Court and provided an overview of the implementation of operational aspects of the management framework to date as well as brief updates on the five constituent projects.

The Principal and the lay member of the Court serving on the AES Oversight Board, Tricia Bey, shared their observations from the Board's first meeting and in doing so stressed the emphasis being placed on managing activity across the wider programme rather than simply as a portfolio of individual projects.

In response to questions the Principal provided an update on aspects relating to the New Combined School (NCS) project and in doing so reiterated that no decisions had been taken with regard to its outcomes and that the University Executive Group (UEG) would consider the outputs of the current design-sprints before preparing proposals for consideration by the Court at its meeting on 15 June 2021.

**The Court decided:** to note the timetable and updates provided and note that AES would be a regular item on future Court agendas.

## 57. DEVELOPING OUR NEW STRATEGY

Following on from the pre-Court session, members reviewed a paper from the University Executive Group (UEG) which summarised progress in the development of the new University Strategy and the suggested process and timeline.

The University Secretary drew member's attention to the outputs of the University Executive Group (UEG) away day which had focussed on the topic of the University Strategy, and the Court confirmed its support for the direction of travel. With regard to the question of 'What type of university do we want to be?' the Court was strongly supportive of the view that the University should develop its own unique identity; and that 'triple-intensity', sustainability, and commitment to the region were core attributes. The Court also strongly endorsed the suggestion that the University take a leading role in environmental and social sustainability, and the development of culture, and health and well-being.

Turning to the University's values, the Court agreed with the suggestion that the existing five core values should be retained and supported the view that how they were described should be reinvigorated. The retention of the current mission statement 'Transforming lives through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge' was strongly supported, as was the suggestion that the current 25-year vision for the University be reviewed at the Court strategy session on 24 May 2021.

The University Secretary drew attention to the case made by the UEG that the strategy should be implementable and should articulate with the three fundamental priorities identified by the UEG in the pre-meeting session. A focus on 'people' was considered crucial for enabling and delivering these priorities and the Court also encouraged the UEG to continue to consider how the priorities related to the University's estate, campus and culture.

The Court considered the timelines and touch points outlined, beginning with the strategy session on 24 May 2021, with the Court ultimately considering a well-developed draft at its meeting in November 2021 and approval being sought for a 'near-final' version at the meeting of the Court in February 2022. Through discussion the Court agreed on the importance of consultation with stakeholder groups to facilitate buy-in to the final version, and members encouraged officers to share further thinking on the consultation process in due course.

The Court raised the importance of the University having a strong communications plan in place to broadcast its strengths as well as its ambitions. Members also suggested that the University should review its focus and footprint in the context of these ambitions.

In response to questions the University Secretary confirmed that the programme included many opportunities for contributions from the Court to shape the development of the next strategy and that, in line with the Statement of Primary Responsibilities and the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance (2017), the Court would be asked to approve and oversee its development and implementation.

**The Court decided:** to support the direction of travel as set out.

58. **RESERVED BUSINESS: UPDATE ON RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK SUBMISSION**

The Vice-Principal (Research, Knowledge Exchange & Wider Impact) informed the Court of the timely completion of the University's submission to the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021.

In presenting the report, the Vice-Principal outlined the REF process and the basis for its impact on reputational rankings and income. The Court noted that it was anticipated that the results of the REF 2021 would be released in April 2022, and noted steps taken to effectively mitigate the risk of a poor outcome through the implementation of a centrally managed and coordinated approach which sought to protect the University's 'world leading' assets and raise all the elements of the submission to at least 'internationally excellent' level.

The Court noted that the Vice-Principal was confident that the University had made the strongest submission that it could and that he anticipated a fundamental improvement in its REF performance. The Vice-Principal however also reminded members that REF and the associated funding and reputational benefits operated on a competitive basis and that it was likely that other institutions would have made similar improvements.

In response to questions the Vice-Principal outlined how the University's Units of Assessment (UOAs) had been developed, with a focus on driving critical mass and interdisciplinary collaboration. Members noted that the four interdisciplinary themes from the current University Strategy (Understanding and improving health and wellbeing; Life-enhancing creativity and design; Innovating technological solutions to tomorrow's problems; Promoting social change to enhance diversity, justice and socio-economic prosperity) had been valuable in the construction and communication of the UOAs within the academic community. The Vice-Principal also outlined changes to the approach for the submission from the School of Medicine following a disappointing performance in the previous REF, and members noted the scale of improvement which was projected in this UOA. The Court noted the robust processes behind the development of the University's REF predictions, including the use of external assessors.

The Vice-Principal went on to provide an overview of increases to Research Postgraduate recruitment and the Court suggested that a full update on the Doctoral Academy be provided to a future meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee. The Court also encouraged the Vice-Principal to return to speak to the Court regarding planning toward the REF 2027 at an appropriate time once the outcome of the REF2021 was known.

In closing discussions on the item, the Court supported the view from the Chair that the paper had provided the Court with confidence regarding the institutional commitment and the professionalism of the teams brought together under the guidance of the Vice-Principal to complete the University of Dundee's REF2021 submission.

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

59. **CHAIR'S REPORT TO COURT**

The Court received a report from the Chair outlining activities he had undertaken on behalf of the Court and the University since its last meeting, including his attendance at meetings of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) and Committee of Scottish Chairs (CSC). Members noted the overview provided a summary of discussions at the Chair & Conveners of Court Committees meeting on 5 April 2021.

In response to questions, the Director of Academic & Corporate Governance provided an update on the scheduling of the election to appoint a successor for Jim Spence as the Rector for the University. Members noted that in accordance with Ordinance 62(1)(2) the Court was responsible for setting the date for the election following consultation with the Senatus and the Students' Association. Noting the proposed timelines for the election, the Court delegated authority to the University Secretary to approve the date on behalf of the Court.

**The Court decided:**

- (i) to delegate authority to the University Secretary to approve the date of the Rectoral election on behalf of the Court; and
- (ii) to note the report.

60. **UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP REPORT TO COURT**

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor introduced the University Executive Group (UEG) report (**appendix 1**). In doing so he drew attention to the update provided on the preparation of the University's Race Equality Charter (REC) submission and early data from the associated race equality survey. The Principal outlined plans for the development of an action plan to address the key findings of the survey (related to both staff and students), and strongly reiterated the University's zero tolerance policy on discrimination. He went on to highlight the University's commitment to working with partners in the sector and from other sectors across Tayside to advance the REC agenda and improve the experience of staff and students.

The Principal also provided an update on consultations in relation to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and University of Dundee Superannuation Scheme (UoDSS). The Court endorsed the decision of the UEG to extend the consultation period for UoDSS and noted that an updated timeline would be provided to the People & Organisational Development Committee in due course. The Court highlighted the importance of ensuring that risks relating to the scheme were appropriately managed.

The Court also discussed expectations for the 2021/22 academic year in the context of COVID-19 restrictions and their impact on a return to campus. In response to questions regarding the vaccination of staff/students the University Secretary confirmed that the University was aligned to the UCEA and Trade Union Statement on vaccination, supporting the roll-out and strongly encouraging uptake.

Members noted that other significant items in the report were addressed elsewhere on the agenda.

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

#### 61. **REPORT TO COURT FROM THE DUSA PRESIDENT**

The Court received a report from the President of the Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA) which provided insight into the key issues and themes affecting the student body since the last meeting of the Court. The report focused on DUSA's continued commitment to the Zero Tolerance Policy and the support/engagement approach of DUSA. The Court was pleased to note the level of student engagement with the recent DUSA elections and also noted the upcoming DUSA Annual Awards at which the work of student societies, volunteers and representatives would be celebrated, and the annual Student-Led Teaching Awards which would recognise the work of teaching staff throughout a challenging year.

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

#### 62. **CONVENERS' REPORTS**

The Conveners introduced their reports, highlighting matters of interest. Approvals are formally noted against the relevant Committee Report (minute 67 below).

The Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee provided an overview of the Committee's meeting on 2 March 2021. The Committee had highlighted the increase in the influence of external factors on risks identified in the Institutional Risk Register. He also highlighted an update on cyber security provided by the Director of UoDIT, challenges in the implementation of mandatory training, the Committee's on-going review of its own effectiveness, and discussion of what would be required from the Business Transformation Steering Group in the next phase.

The Convener of the Finance & Policy Committee highlighted the consideration of a report from the Vice-Principal (Education) on projected savings relating to the reduction in modules associated with the teaching efficiency element of the AES programme. The Court noted that the Deans had been charged with ensuring that the corresponding savings in their 2021/22 budgets were delivered, but that the achievement of these would be challenging. The Convener also highlighted early discussions with the University's bank regarding the revolving credit facility and anticipated cost of delivering a digitally enabled campus; student recruitment projections – and in particular the on-going impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the Committee's review of the Business Transformation Programme benefits and efficiencies relative to those set out in the business case.

The Convener of the Governance & Nominations Committee drew members attention to the recommendation to Court that Karen Thomson be appointed as the Convener of the Remuneration Committee from 1 August 2021. The Court was unanimously supportive of the proposal and wished Karen well in the role (see also minute 67 (below)). Members also noted that the Committee had considered updates relating to the election of the Senior Independent Member (SIM) of Court and the appointment of the Deputy Chair of Court, and had been satisfied that applicable governance processes have been appropriately followed (see also minute 63(below)).

The Convener of the People & Organisational Development Committee focussed her update on matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, and in particular the preliminary outputs from the survey which would form part of the University's submission to the Race Equality Charter. Members noted that the Committee would return to the matter once the full data analysis was available, but echoed the view of the University Executive Group (UEG) (minute 60 (above)) that there was no place for discrimination in the University community. The Court noted that the Committee had endorsed the Public Sector Equality Duty Mainstreaming report for submission to the Scottish Funding Council, and that it maintained an interest in matters relating to the impact on staff of proposed changes to pension benefits. Finally, the Court noted that the Committee had participated in a training session on the University's processes and policies relating to recognition and reward.

The Court noted that the Remuneration Committee had undertaken its annual continuing professional development session on 9 March 2021, which had this year focussed on recognition and reward processes for clinical staff and the review of the CUC HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code. The Court noted that the Committee had identified a small number of issues for further consideration and update at future meetings and was committed to continuing its programme of training.

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

### 63. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

(1) Election of the Senior Independent Member on Court (SIM)

**The Court decided:** to formally note the election of Jane Marshall as the Senior Independent Member on Court from 1 August 2021 until the end of her term of office on 31/07/2023.

(2) Appointment of the Deputy Chair of Court

**The Court decided:** to homologate the decision taken by the Court via electronic circulation to appoint Tricia Bey as the Deputy Chair of Court from 1 August 2021. In accordance with Statute 9(4) she shall begin a new term of office on the Court, shall hold office for a period of four years and shall be eligible for re-appointment, but may not exceed the maximum total continuous period of office on Court.

(3) Dundee University Students' Association Elections 2021

The outcomes of the Dundee University Students' Association Elections 2021 were tabled during the meeting.

**The Court decided:** to note the outcomes of the elections as follows:

President: Dimitris Vidakis (Sabbatical role)  
 VP Academia: Izuin Hanis Abu Bakar (Sabbatical role)  
 VP Student Wellbeing: Catherine Coyle (Sabbatical Role)  
 VP Representation: Samantha McElhinney (Sabbatical Role)

VP Community: Laura van Overbeek Crusells  
VP Student Activities: Josh Sutcliffe  
VP Fundraising: Megan-Rose Birdsall  
Senior Independent Member of Court: (to be confirmed).

64. **REPORT FROM THE CONVENER OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS**

The Court received a report from the Chair of the Senatus Academicus and noted in particular the Senate's discussion of the University Executive Group (UEG) decision to postpone academic promotions processes to ensure that staff were not disadvantaged in any application by the disruption to teaching and research during the pandemic. In this regard members noted that the UEG expected to update academic staff on the position in the very near future. The Principal also highlighted discussions relating to workload and members noted it had proven difficult, despite extensive consultation, to identify many areas or activities that could be stopped or reduced.

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

65. **NARRATIVE FOR SENATE**

The Chair of Court agreed to highlight to the Senate: an outline of the pre-Court session on University Executive Group (UEG) priorities and the next University Strategy; the update received on progress in relation to the Academic Excellence & Sustainability programme, and the importance of Senate's engagement with it; the timeline for the development of the next University Strategy, and the role of the Senate in consultations; the Court's appreciation for those involved in the Research Excellence Framework submission; the Court's delegation of authority to the University Secretary to determine the date of the rectoral election; and discussions regarding equality, diversity and inclusion as raised in the Principal's report to the Court.

**The Court decided:** to note the areas for inclusion in the report to the Senate.

66. **REPORT FROM MEETINGS OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS**

The Court received a report from the meeting of the Senatus Academicus on 24 March 2021 (**appendix 2**) and noted the areas highlighted to the Court in minute 64 (above).

**The Court decided:**

- (i) to approve the recommendation that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on Professor Mary Renfrew;
- (ii) to approve the draft academic calendar (appendix); and
- (iii) to note discussion of Academic Promotions, REF, and Academic Workload.



67. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**(1) Audit & Risk Committee Minutes(i) Minute of the meeting on 2 March 2021

The Court received the minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 2 March 2021 (**appendix 3**). Matters for discussion with the Court are highlighted in minute 62 (above).

**The Court decided:** (i) to approve the Institutional Risk Register and note the COVID-19 Risk Register; and

(ii) otherwise to approve the report.

(ii) Reserved Business: Minute 11 of the meeting on 2 March 2021

The Court received Minute 11 of the meeting of the Committee on 2 March 2021.

*The University asserts that the minute is exempt from public disclosure and claims exemptions in S.30(b)(i) of the Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002. It shall be published as an appendix to the minute of the meeting at which its approval for release is granted.*

**The Court decided:** to approve the report.

(2) Finance & Policy Committee Minutes

The Court received the minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 23 March 2021 (**appendix 4**). The Court's discussion of matters raised by the Committee is detailed in the Conveners' Report (Minute 62).

**The Court decided:** to approve the report.

(3) Governance & Nominations Committee

The Court received the minutes of the Committee's meeting on 23 March 2021 (**appendix 5**). The Court's discussion of matters raised by the Committee is detailed in the Conveners' Report (Minute 62).

**The Court decided:** (i) to approve the proposal that Karen Thomson be appointed to the role of Convener of the Remuneration Committee from 1 August 2021; and

(ii) otherwise to approve the minutes.

(4) People & Organisational Development Committee

The Court received the minutes of the Committee's meeting on 15 March 2021 (**appendix 6**). The Court's discussion of matters raised by the Committee are detailed in the Conveners' Report (Minute 62).

**The Court decided:** to approve the minutes.

(5) Welfare & Ethical Use of Animals Committee

The Court received the minutes of the Committee's meeting on 15 April 2021 (**appendix 7**).

**The Court decided:** to approve the report.

68. **STAFF COUNCIL MINUTES**

The Court received the minutes from the Staff Council's 'Principal's Question Time' on 3 March 2021, where discussions had focussed on matters relating to the COVID-19 pandemic including staff well-being and workload, evaluation of support for staff, and the Annual Review of Research (ARR) expectations.

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

69. **SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS**

The Court noted the appointment of the following members of staff:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Professor Graeme Hutton	Interim Dean (School of Social Sciences)	1 March 2021
Professor Philip Preshaw	Dean of the School of Dentistry	1 March 2021
Dr Murray Frame	Interim Dean (School of Humanities)	1 February 2021

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

Mr Ronald Bowie  
Chair of Court  
University of Dundee

## APPENDIX 1

### UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP REPORT TO COURT (Minute 60)

#### A. INTRODUCTION

1. In the two months since the University Executive Group's (UEG) last report to Court, a significant amount of our time has been spent on reviewing and refining the UEG priorities as well as considering options for the University's future Strategy and taking forward the matters of the day. Throughout this report we make significant reference to UEG's thinking around strategy and priorities, and we will explore this in greater depth during the Court Briefing immediately before the meeting of the Court.

#### B. STRATEGIC MATTERS

##### University Strategy

2. Since the last meeting of Court, UEG have begun to consider the foundations for the development of the next University strategy. As set out in the [Court Statement of Primary Responsibilities](#) and the [Scottish Code of Good HE Governance](#) the approval and oversight of the delivery of the University's mission, vision and strategy are matters reserved to the Court, and the UEG is seeking early input from the Court at this meeting and at the additional half-day strategic Court event on 24 May 2021, and we very much look forward to those discussions.

##### UEG Priorities

3. Since the last meeting of Court, the UEG have met on a number of occasions to review and develop our strategic priorities in the context of new leadership, a changing external environment, and the need to sharpen our focus to reach a sustainable future. Through various discussions, the UEG have identified three priorities that are considered critical to the achievement of the University Strategy and to the quality, reputation and financial sustainability of the University as we move forward: delivering Academic Excellence and Sustainability; Growing Recruitment (International Focus); and creating a Digitally Enabled University. The process by which we have reached this conclusion, our aspirations within each of these three areas, and next steps in identifying, monitoring, and achieving our objectives within these priorities are set out in the pre-Court Briefing paper. These three priorities have formed the building blocks upon which we have begun to consider our approach to the development of a new University Strategy beyond 2022, and this is explored further in paper D, and will be one aspect of the pre-Court meeting discussions – and of course of the additional Strategy Court Session on 24 May 2021.
4. Our focus has now turned to how we can take these priorities and cascade them to deans, school managers and directors and ensure that they are reflected within schools and directorates plans, as well as our own personal priorities. Once the UEG have further developed the objectives and milestones within these priorities we will begin to include updates to the Court in the same manner as we have reported against the previous priorities.

##### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

5. As a leadership team we continue to advance the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda with the understanding that it is a cornerstone to creating a high performance, thriving community. It remains a standing item on all meetings of the UEG and is a lens through which we view all our activities, including our three priorities. Since the last meeting of Court, we have made some significant progress in areas such as our Black Lives Matter action tracker, Race Equality Charter submission and work on Athena Swan. The Athena Swan award was discussed in more detail by the People & Organisational Development Committee of the Court and as such is not provided in detail here, however we wish to highlight to the Court the strong interest in the role to lead our activities in this area, and we will report to Court in due course when an appointment has been made to support this meaningful and complex piece of work.
6. Another important institutional objective is the Race Equality Charter, which again has been the focus of recent discussion at the People & Organisational Development Committee. Professor Hari Hundal, a Principal Investigator in the School of Life Sciences, is leading this work and has already attended a recent UEG joint Deans' Group meeting to update us on progress with our Charter submission and to share with us the preliminary findings of the University's Race Survey. Once the analysis of the survey is complete, the full survey report will be published in due course alongside an action plan and we will engage with the People & Organisational Development Committee and Court in due course with regard to our approach. Alongside the plan there will be much work to be done to address the key

findings (related to both staff and students), and we will remain committed to this agenda in the long-term and the careful communication of the action plan to our community. There is a lot we can learn from the experiences of others in the sector who have undertaken similar exercises. There is no place for discrimination of any kind within the University and its community and we publicly and unequivocally reiterate the University's zero tolerance policy and approach. We also remain committed to working with partners in the sector and from other sectors across Tayside to advance this agenda and improve the experience of our staff and students.

## C. EXTERNAL MATTERS

### People Matters

7. In the sub-sections below, we provide updates to the Court on specific people matters which may be of interest to members. These issues have been a prominent focus at many of our recent UEG meetings, particularly given their scale and impact. We continue to monitor, track and evaluate all emerging risks to ensure staff are well informed of the on-going situation and that the University can plan and respond accordingly.

### **Pensions**

8. At the time of writing, consultation in relation to the position of the local (UoDSS) and national (USS) pensions schemes are both underway. The University launched its employer consultation for UoDSS on March 15, the details of which the Court discussed at its last meeting on 23 February, and UUK launched its employee consultation on USS on 9 April seeking views from all employers with members within the scheme on how a valuable, affordable, inclusive, and sustainable scheme could be achieved for their participants.
9. Understandably changes to contributions and benefits are a cause of concern for many staff, and we are actively engaging staff and stakeholders in the UoDSS consultation process and providing access to information sessions and support in relation to both schemes. Initial discussion with the trade unions has resulted in agreement by the University to extend the period for the UoDSS consultation to ensure all staff can fully engage in the process, and we will update further, as appropriate at the April meeting.

### **Pay**

10. The University is part of the national pay bargaining framework, with UCEA acting on behalf of Universities in the latest round which began on 26 March. The Court will recall that due to the difficult financial position of the sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, no pay uplift was awarded through this national framework in the 2020 round, and we will continue to keep the Court and its committee apprised of developments in the current year.

### Scottish Funding Council

11. Court members will recall that on the 18 March we invited Mike Cantlay, Chair of SFC to present on developments within the on-going review, matters of strategy, how we can strengthen our relationship with the SFC and finally, issues concerning funding allocation. We were pleased to hear recognition of our achievements as a University, for example, in the context of widening access and our significant research intensity, as well as promises of reform regarding the validation model – something we have been lobbying on for some time. In this regard, it is worth noting two significant announcements from SFC on 24 March, the first relating to additional funding for 2020/21 (current year) of £4.4m for the University and the other announcing our indicative grant for 2021/22, which delivered an increase of £3.7m in funding compared to both last year and our Budget Plan assumptions. The increase is largely attributable to the removal of the validation model, an uplift in the price paid per funded place and additional places for non-controlled subjects. Both announcements are extremely welcome. We are encouraged to see both SFC's recognition of the financial pressures the pandemic has placed upon the sector as well as the tangible benefits of the removal of the validation model. The Principal wrote to Karen Watt at SFC to acknowledge these developments and record our appreciation.
12. In relation to the University's ambition, there was an encouraging sense of alignment between some of our new strategic priorities and the SFC's focus within Phase 2 of the review. The SFC have since published a [progress report on this phase](#) which highlights their continued focus on the 'emergency years' and commitment to supporting universities through the pandemic whilst maintaining momentum on developing initial themes identified in Phase 1. The session was overall a useful step in strengthening our relationship with the SFC. We intend to build these types of interactions into our stakeholder engagement plan moving forward.

### Research Excellence Framework 2021

13. We are delighted to confirm that the University recently completed its Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 submission ahead of the 31 March deadline. The REF is the national system for assessing research quality in UK higher

education institutions and takes place every 7-8 years. REF outcomes are critical to SFC REG grant calculations, our academic reputation, and our UK and international league table rankings. The importance of this submission to the achievement of our ambitions over the next 5-10 years cannot be overstated.

14. The *Strategy for REF2021* sought to protect our most successful units ranked in the UK top 10 in REF2014 and eliminate past weaknesses in processes and judgment. Our minimum expectation is top quartile performance within all units of assessment. For some units, this represents a major reach, while for others retaining their strong existing ranking is the priority. Achieving an overall result in the UK's top 30 (on a Grade Point Average basis) is a realistic ambition based on our own improvements, but of course this remains contingent on our performance relative to other institutions.
15. It should be noted that all staff across our Schools and Directorates who were directly and indirectly connected with the REF2021 submission have worked tirelessly and made extraordinary efforts, especially latterly in the face of Covid-19. All preparations, and some of the very sensitive decisions required, have been informed by our carefully crafted Code of Practice and in accordance with the OneDundee spirit. A more detailed paper and summary presentation of our strategic approach and achievements made will be shared ahead of the Court meeting.

#### **D. COVID MATTERS**

##### Semester 1 Outlook

16. The UEG have been engaged in several discussions regarding the preparation for teaching in the next academic year. Four planning scenarios have been established ('normal', 'optimistic', 'possible' and 'other factors to consider') so that we can maintain the quality of our provision and deliver teaching irrespective of the public health situation in Scotland, the UK and internationally. In short, we will deliver a blended approach to teaching backed up by synchronous/asynchronous online delivery of lectures which will be recorded in hybrid classrooms with updated infrastructure. This blended approach should add a layer of resilience to our teaching offer in 2021/22. Whilst our primary ambition is for a return to campus over the coming months and for the return of students in September, we will use lessons learned in 2020/21 to assist with preparations for 2021/22. Full plans have been communicated to staff and students and we hope that this student-focused, carefully considered approach will help us to uphold our reputation of offering an excellent student experience.

##### Outbreak Management

17. Members will be aware that the University experienced a COVID-19 outbreak recently, which was traced to a small number of illegal student parties in private accommodation. A total of 155 cases were identified in University of Dundee students relating to this outbreak, with no evidence of any transmission in halls of residences, in face-to-face teaching or through any other on-campus activity (such as accessing the library). Additional cleaning measures were put in place on campus and the University's asymptomatic test centre opening hours were extended to try to identify as many asymptomatic cases as possible and provide reassurance to students. The University worked closely with Public Health, which has praised our management of the incident, sharing knowledge and ensuring any emerging risks were mitigated. We are deeply disappointed by the behaviour of the small minority of students responsible and have taken disciplinary action where appropriate. We would like to express our sincerest thanks to those involved in the response who worked tirelessly throughout this period, including over weekends, to manage the outbreak and ensure our community of staff and students remained safe.

#### **E. INTERNAL MATTERS**

##### Financial Matters

18. In line with our long-standing goal of achieving financial sustainability, the Director Finance recently provided an update to the Finance & Policy Committee regarding finance requirements, risks and the budget setting process. Investment requirements were a key theme of this discussion, specifically the level of investment required to support our capital ambition and strategic priorities, such as improving digital capabilities over the coming years. Strategic investments will be a key factor in achieving longer-term financial sustainability, allowing us to focus our efforts in areas that will deliver further income, enhance efficiency and enable continued investment in the University. Members will be pleased to note that the 2020/21 financial return showed a significant improvement on the COVID impacted budget. Work is currently underway to develop the budget for the 2021/22 cycle which will be presented to Finance & Policy Committee and Court in the next cycle of meetings.

### Student Recruitment

#### **2021/2022 Applications**

19. It is normal for the April report to the Court to include an update on the application position for entry in the following academic year. Regardless of the underlying demand position, it is clear that this is a very uncertain cycle, and so our focus is on maximising demand from each region for September 2021 and converting as many as possible of those applicants who deferred from September 2020. In considering the data we would emphasise the following:

- We expect that EU student conversion rates will be adversely affected due to changes to funding and fee status for these students post-Brexit.
- As with last year, we expect to need a strong performance in Clearing to maintain and grow our RUK UG intake in 2021/22.
- Undergraduate Non-MD40 demand appears weaker than in previous cycles, but these data include the decline in EU applications associated with the introduction of fees for EU students. Allowing for this, the Scottish-domiciled Non-MD40 position is, in fact, in line with last year, and MD20 and MD40 demand increases are greater than that apparent in data reviewed. There is nonetheless variation in demand levels between Schools, and where Scottish demand is weaker this year, specifically for the School of Business and the School of Science & Engineering, mitigating actions have been agreed and further analysis is underway. We expect to meet our SFC-funded caps and targets.
- 2021/22 Semester 1 Overseas PGT applications remain 25% down on the same point in 2020/21, and 29% up on the same point in 2019/20. This may be a symptom of lower post-Covid demand, noting applications are most significantly lower from East Asia and Africa, reflecting the health security concerns and economic impact of the pandemic respectively. It is unclear whether the current position is also the product of relative difference with the late 2019 surge in applications associated with UK Post-study Work Visa announcements. A further note on issues affecting international demand is below.

#### **International Risks**

20. At the most recent meeting of Finance & Policy Committee on 23 March 2021, members received a contextual paper on international student recruitment, including risks and challenges, that set the scene for the upcoming budget and beyond. Some key messages to highlight are that we are currently subject to three new international student trends: a much stronger regulatory Government role; increasingly differential arrangements in Scotland from those in the rest of the UK (e.g., quarantine countries) and differential rules for international and home students. Where possible, we are taking mitigating action in an attempt to reduce those risks that lie within our control, but many factors remain out of our sphere of influence such as geopolitical factors and exchange rate volatility. Finally, it is worth noting that the uncertainties around vaccination, travel and quarantine arrangements in sending countries means we anticipate very late decision making by international candidates in this cycle. To mitigate risk where we can, we will be offering most international students the opportunity to study remotely in 2021/22 and are currently developing a China Support Hub to support this cohort of students.

### Future Working

21. With what has been over a year now of the majority of our staff working remotely we are beginning to reimagine what the future dynamic of our workforce will look like. The Director of HR & OD has been working closely with Schools and Directorates to identify their thoughts on future working arrangements and what this might entail. We are currently in the process of collating this information to form what will be our approach as we transition through the other side of the pandemic and return to campus. We will update Court in due course when plans have been further developed.

### Stakeholder Engagement

22. Extending the University's influence and reach through meaningful collaboration has been identified as a prime importance going forward. The Principal continues his programme of engagements where he has met with elected representatives (MPs, MSPs, councilors), further education institutions (Dundee & Angus College), sister universities (Abertay, St Andrews) as well as press and journal engagements, attending the Courier's Business Breakfast event earlier in March. The Director of External Relations has been working on consolidating a strategic approach to our engagements through the development of a stakeholder engagement plan, which we will report back on in due course.

### Tay Cities

23. As Court will recall, we had an interesting session at the last Court Briefing that outlined the Tay Cities Deal in terms of its positioning within our institutional ambitions at a strategic level as well as details on the business plans and phasing. Since then, we have completed the legal agreement for the *Growing the Tay Cities Biomedical Cluster* Project

and submitted our first claim. We expect to receive the first funding drawdown of £0.5m in May. In addition, we have been working on how we manage our input and set priorities for economic engagement in the city and region.

#### Senior Appointments

24. A number of appointments of note have been made since the last meeting of Court. The Principal has accepted a role within Universities UK as representative to the European Union Advisory Research Working Group, while the University Secretary & COO has been re-appointed for a second term as Convener of the Universities Scotland Secretaries Group. The Vice Principal (International) has accepted an invitation to Chair the Times Higher Education Student Advisory Board and the newly established UK National Committee on China (UKNCC) and has also been invited to join the Department of International Trade (DIT)/ Department for Education (DfE) Education Sector Advisory Group. This is a testament to the breadth of expertise and standing of our leadership team and a recognition of the presence the University has built across the higher education sector.
25. The UEG also recently approved the creation of three Assistant Vice-Principal posts to drive forward the UEG's newly established strategic priorities: taking forward the agenda of academic excellence, sustainability and performance; meeting challenging targets for international and unregulated recruitment; and enhancing our digital capabilities to deliver an excellent digital campus experience. In the meantime, recruitment for the Senior VP post has moved forward with an interesting pool of candidates emerging. Longlisting will take place later this month and interviews are scheduled for June 10th.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

26. It is clear that the road ahead continues to hold many challenges, including continuing to drive forward the development and delivery of a confident and inspiring strategy at the same time as we deliver needed change in our institution and maintain excellence in our BAU activity. External challenges, such as to pensions provision, will also need to be dealt with, not always to our own timing. Our current position nevertheless could be described as somewhat of a transition phase. Between now and the next update to Court, the UEG will consolidate our thinking on strategic priorities, advance the development of the next strategy working closely with the Court and move forward on our three priorities, described earlier.

**University Executive Group**  
**April 2021**

**Annex 1. Research Related Grants**

1. The selection of grants and awards detailed below is intended to showcase the diverse range of research undertaken across the University which is enabled by funding sources that include research councils, charities and industrial sponsors. Please note that any joint awards listed below state the University of Dundee value only.

A. Research Award Highlights

- (i) **Dr H McSorely (School of Life Sciences)**  
**Molecular Regulators of the Alarmin IL-33 in Health and Disease**  
**£1,506,621.05 from Wellcome Trust**

The protein IL-33 acts as a messenger for the immune system and has important roles in parasitic worm infection, allergies and obesity. This research will investigate how, at a molecular level, parasitic worms suppress IL-33 responses to survive immune system assault. Conversely, this research will also investigate how the immune system stabilises IL-33 in the blood, sustaining its effects, and which cells in the respond to IL-33 in the different organs of the body.

- (ii) **Professor I H Gilbert (School of Life Sciences)**  
**Optimisation of Multistage Inhibitors of P. Falciparum Lysyl-t-RNA Synthetase**  
**for the Treatment of Malaria (joint with Eisai Pharmaceuticals and Medicines for Malaria Venture)"**  
**£696,553 (including £142,889 overhead) from the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund**

Malaria is a major scourge, affecting large parts of the world, in particular Low and Middle Income Countries. Despite recent progress in reducing the number of cases of malaria, every year more than 400,000 people die from this terrible disease, predominantly children under the age of 5 and pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa. Tackling this disease requires multiple approaches, including new medicines, bed-nets, insecticides and vaccines. In this project we have been developing inhibitors of an enzyme called lysyl tRNA synthetase as a potential new treatment of malaria. This enzyme is critical for all cells to make proteins; essential building blocks in cells. We have developed compounds that inhibit this enzyme specifically in the parasites that cause malaria. We have demonstrated that inhibitors of this enzyme have the potential for both the treatment of malaria and prevention of malaria (chemoprotection). The aim of this project is to discover improved compounds with potential to treat human infection. In particular we want to identify a compound suitable for single dose treatment of malaria.

- (iii) **Dr M Bergkessel (School of Life Sciences)**  
**Development of a Drug Discovery Platform Targeting Salmonella Typhimurium PersisterCells**  
**£183,084.00 from Tres Cantos Open Lab Foundation**

A collaborative project involving faculty from the Division of Molecular Microbiology (Dr Megan Bergkessel and Prof Sarah Coulthurst), the Division of Biological Chemistry and Drug Discovery (Prof Ian Gilbert and Prof Kevin Read), the University of Liverpool (Prof Jay Hinton) and the Tres Cantos Open Lab Foundation/GSK (Dr Tim Miles) has received approximately £183,000 in funding from the Tres Cantos Open Lab Foundation. The goal of the project is to identify compounds that are active against particularly dangerous strains of Salmonella enterica Typhimurium that cause invasive disease with high fatality rates among young children in Africa. Evidence suggests that slow-growing "persister" states of these bacteria contribute to relapse and are not efficiently eradicated by existing antibiotics, so these will be a focus of the research.

- (iv) **Professor S J McKenna (School of Science and Engineering)**  
**Deep Learning for Effective Triaging of Skin Disease in the NHS**  
**£149,949 (including £74,489 overhead) from NHS National Institute for Health Research**

This interdisciplinary award will enable further development of decision support software for diagnosis of skin disease. It will use artificial intelligence technology based on deep (machine) learning from routinely acquired images of skin lesions. The project is an important step towards integration into everyday NHS clinical care. Diagnosis and management of suspected skin cancer represents over 50% of a specialist dermatology service workload with primary care practitioners often lacking the necessary experience to distinguish innocent from cancerous lesions. Decision support using machine learning has the potential to enable fast, remote diagnosis, resulting in fewer appointments and improved patient satisfaction.



- (v) **Professor E R Jefferson (School of Medicine)**  
**Creating a National Platform for Molecular Studies of Multiple Conditions; HDR UK Multiomics Consortium (Joint with University of Cambridge, University of Edinburgh and Wellcome Sanger Institute)**  
**£98,160 including £5,980 overhead) from HDR UK (Health Data Research UK)**

Trusted Research Environments (otherwise known as Safe Havens) are secure virtual environments where researchers can access sensitive anonymised health data. The HDR UK Multiomics Consortium will enhance these environments to support multi-omic data (genomic, proteomic, metabolomic data along with images) along with supporting artificial intelligence and machine learning. This will support research at pace and scale.

- (vi) **Dr A Farre (School of Health Sciences)**  
**Perinatal Experiences During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Scotland: Exploring the Impact on Changes to Maternity Services on Women and Staff (Joint with University of Aberdeen)**  
**£36,669 (including £31,773 overhead) from Public Health Scotland**

This project will identify how changes in Scottish maternity services during the Covid-19 pandemic have been perceived and experienced by pregnant and postnatal women and maternity care staff. We will conduct individual online/telephone interviews and an online survey across all 14 NHS Health Boards in Scotland. Study findings will enable a better understanding of how changes in maternity care have impacted women and healthcare professionals as well as inform recommendations on how Scottish maternity services should evolve during and following the Covid-19 pandemic.

- (vii) **Dr A Watterson (Duncan of Jordandstone College of Art and Design)**  
**AHRC Follow on Funding Grant: Nunalleq Culture and Archaeology Center Digital Museum**  
**Dr Charlotta Hillerdal, University of Aberdeen (PI) and Dr Alice Watterson, University of Dundee (Co-I)**  
**£32,260 (including £15,822 overhead) from University of Aberdeen**

This project supports the development of an online 'digital museum' facilitating remote access to the internationally significant but remotely located Nunalleq archaeological collection, co-curated between the local Yup'ik community and Nunalleq archaeologists. This practice-based research aims to connect the contemporary lived experience and traditional knowledge of the Yup'ik community with archaeological science and interpretation.

- (vii) **Dr S J Halliday (School of Social Sciences)**  
**Scoping the Development of a Model to Estimate Phosphorus (P) Loads to Water From Septic Tanks (with James Hutton Institute and St Andrews University)**  
**£10,000 (including £10,000 overhead) from Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW)**

B. All Other Research Awards

Name	School	Project Title	Total Value	Funder
<b>Dr G Sollberger</b>	Life Sciences	Establish New Model Systems to Understand Human Neutrophil Biology	£99,826	Academy of Medical Sciences
<b>Professor M Gratzke</b>	Doctoral Academy	Training Grant, UKRI COVID 19 Doctoral Funding	£96,639	Natural Environment Research Council
<b>Dr M Mclean</b>	Medicine	Defining the Role of Interleukin-33 in Gastrointestinal Fibrosis as a New Treatment Target for Crohn's Disease (PhD Studentship)	£89,158	Tenovus Tayside
<b>Dr S G Cunningham</b>	Medicine	My Diabetes My Way - Core Funding Apr 2020 - Mar 2021 "	£81,797	Scottish Diabetes Group
<b>Dr S G Cunningham</b>	Medicine	My Diabetes My Way - Core Funding Apr 2020 - Mar 2021	£81,797	Scottish Government

<b>Professor D R Alessi</b>	Life Sciences	Mouse Cell Line Characterisation (other inst: Rutgers University)	£51,271 (including £4,661 overhead)	Michael J Fox Foundation for Parkinsons Research
<b>Dr S M McKim</b>	Life Sciences	Australia Partnering Award International Pooling for Advanced Cereal Science - IPAC (Joint with James Hutton Institute (JHI), Waite Institute of University of Adelaide, La Trobe University, Australian National University) (Travel Grant)	£47,766	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
<b>Dr A Mohan</b>	Health Sciences	Evaluating Later or Expanded Premises Hours For Alcohol In The Night-time Economy (ELEPHANT): a Mixed-methods, Natural Experiment Evaluation(joint with Stirling University, Glasgow University, Sheffield University, Glasgow Caledonian University and Glasgow City HSCP)	£28,090 (including £28,090 overhead)	NHS National Institute for Health Research
<b>Dr A Duthie</b>	NHS Tayside	Scottish Mental Health Research Network (Salary Funding 2019/20)	£23,000	Scottish Mental Health Research Network
<b>Professor J D Chalmers</b>	Medicine	European Respiratory Society Short Guidelines On The Management Of COVID19	£20,005.22	European Respiratory Society
<b>Dr A M McFadden</b>	Health Sciences	Exploring the Experiences and Support Needs During Pregnancy of Women Who Have Had a Previous Child Removed	£18,376 (including £2,681 overhead)	Wellbeing of Women
<b>Mr V Pitsinis</b>	Medicine	Influence Study: Indocyanine Green Node Fluorescence Study (Research Development Grant) (Joint with Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation)	£10,000	Association of Breast Surgery
<b>Mrs L Gordon</b>	Medicine	To Develop Evidence-Based Interventions To Support Doctors Well-Being And Promote Resilience During COVID-19 Related Transitions (And Beyond): Phase 2 (Joint with Universities of Aberdeen, St Andrews, Glasgow, Edinburgh and NHS Education for Scotland)	£8,000 (including £5,948 overhead)	Scottish Medical Education Research Consortium
<b>Dr L M Jones</b>	Medicine	Considerations for Practice: Effective use of Online Discussion Boards (ASME/GMC Excellent Medical Education Award 2020)	£5,000	Association for the Study of Medical Education (ASME)
<b>Professor G G Simpson</b>	Life Sciences	Adaptive Sequencing of Evolutionarily Distant Disease Resistance Genes Using Nanopore (Joint with University of Cambridge)	£3,250	Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA)

<b>Dr G Saredi</b>	Life Sciences	Faithful Epigenetic Inheritance And Germline Integrity In C Elegans	£3,220	Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA)
<b>Dr P Ramsay</b>	Health Sciences	Work-Related Stress: the Impact of COVID-19 on Critical Care and Redeployed Nurses (Joint with Aberdeen, Glasgow and Queen Margaret Universities)	£2,786 (including £2,786 overhead)	NHS National Institute for Health Research

## Annex 2. People and Prizes

Below is a summary of the awards and prizes that have been achieved by our University of Dundee community since the writing of our last UEG report to Court.

### Dundee Academics Honoured by the Royal Society of Edinburgh

1. In late March 2021, 4 of our academics leading in fields as diverse as cleft palate research, contemporary art, infectious diseases and reproductive medicine have been elected Fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE). The RSE is Scotland's national academy, focused on delivering its mission of 'knowledge made useful'. Fellows are elected in recognition of their impact in improving the world around them. The new Fellows from the University are as follows:
  - Professor Christopher Barratt, Professor of Reproductive Medicine (School of Medicine)
  - Professor Calum Colvin, Professor of Fine Art Photography (Duncan of Jordandstone College of Art and Design)
  - Professor Peter Mossey, Professor of Craniofacial Development and Associate Dean for Internationalisation (School of Dentistry)
  - Professor Dilip Nathwani, Honorary Emeritus Professor of Infection (School of Medicine)
2. We are delighted that four of our academics have been recognised in such prestigious honour. It is a testament to the breadth and diversity of our high-performance research community across the University of Dundee.

### British Thoracic Society's Early Career Investigator Award

3. Holly Kier, a PhD student at the University of Dundee, has received the British Thoracic Society's Early Career Investigator Award at the organisation's annual Winter Meeting. The BTS Early Career Investigator Award is highly competitive and is awarded in recognition of the very best basic, translational or clinical research performed in the UK respiratory community by an early career researcher.
4. Over the last year, she has been working on potential treatment for COVID-19 and led several studies which showed for the first time that an excessive type of immune response called neutrophil extracellular trap formation (NETs) was present in bronchiectasis and that this is linked to worsening symptoms. She also showed that antibiotic treatment can reduce NET levels in lungs, leading to improved outcomes for patients. The award is a great achievement and demonstrates the young talent we carry at the University.

### Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences

5. The University of Dundee's Professor Divya Jindal-Snape has been conferred as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in recognition of her work to improve understanding of educational and life transitions. Professor Jindal-Snape is Director of the University's Transformative Change: Educational and Life Transitions (TCELT) Research Centre. Her research has raised awareness of the positive, dynamic and complex nature of transitions and inclusion and has helped shape policy and practice in these areas.
6. Her work is an example of our strategy in motion with Professor Divya Jindal-Snape commenting; "The University of Dundee's core purpose is to transform lives, working locally and globally through the creation, sharing, and application of knowledge. This is what drives my research."

**Annex 3. University Executive Group Meetings**

The University Executive Group has met formally on 24 February, 10 March, 12 March, 24 March and 7 April 2021. Four additional UEG's were convened on, 17 February, 19 March, 26 March and 14 April to discuss strategic matters and priorities. The following items were considered:

**A. CORPORATE MATTERS**

- COVID
  - Contingency planning for education 2021/22
  - Sub-Group updates
  - Outbreak management
  - Testing
- Graduation
- Tay Cities Capital Board proposal

**B. HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
  - Race Charter submission
  - Athena Swan submission
- Workload management
- Reward and recognition processes
- Pay negotiations
- Senior appointments

**C. FINANCE MATTERS**

- Pensions (UoDSS, USS)
- Budget update
- Financial sustainability plan: capital and financing
- Investment bid for international income generation

**D. STRATEGIC MATTERS**

- Academic excellence and structure
- Organisational change proposals (SSEN)
- University strategy
- Performance indicators
- UEG priorities

**E. ACADEMIC MATTERS**

- Deans staff management analysis
- REF 2021
- Presentation of Life Sciences district

**APPENDIX 2****REPORT FROM MEETINGS OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS  
(Minute 66)****UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE****COMMUNICATION FROM THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS****(Meeting of 24 March 2021)****1. REPORTING TO UNIVERSITY COURT**

The following items were selected by Senate to highlight to Court:

Senate's discussions on:

The postponement of the academic promotions round in 2021;

The Vice-Principal's Presentation on the University's REF Submission; and

Actions and proposals for managing academic workloads.

**2. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT****Principal's Report**

The Senatus received a Verbal Report from the Principal.

The Principal noted the progress of the Tay Cities Deal projects and reported that the University's Business Plans had been finalised and agreed. He explained that planning permission and other regulatory approvals would be sought.

The Principal reported that after detailed discussions with the Scottish Funding Council the University had been granted a long-term low interest loan facility. He noted that the Funding Council had demonstrated that it had confidence in the University's plans for financial recovery and recognised its role as a triple-intensive world-class institution.

The Principal reflected on his programme of visits to Schools and Directorates and reported on an excellent annual review event in the School of Medicine. He explained that he had found areas of strength across the University.

The Principal reported that the Design Sprints that were part of the Academic Excellence & Sustainability project around a New Combined School were underway and thanked staff for their positive engagement with the process.

**University Executive Group**

The Principal also reported on the work of the University Executive Group (UEG). He explained that UEG had undertaken a cybersecurity scenario planning exercise and asked Senate to note the increase in threats to the sector. He referred to recent cyber attacks on universities and other public sector organisations that had caused considerable disruption.

The Principal reported on UEG's discussions on the next phase of the University Strategy development cycle. He explained that Senate would need to be fully involved to ensure a focus on key academic priorities. He reported that UEG had discussed three themes (i) academic excellence and sustainability (ii) international student recruitment and (iii) becoming a digitally enabled institution.

The Principal also reported on UEG's discussions on preparations for the next academic year and noted the need for a clear, well planned and student-focussed approach. He emphasised the need for the University to take firm action in those areas where it had control to ensure a safe and high-quality educational experience for its students.

### The Rector

Senate was asked to note that the Rector (Jim Spence) had stepped down from the role and that the Students' Association would be opening nominations to fill the vacancy in the near future. The Principal thanked the outgoing Rector for his contribution to the life of the University during his term of office.

Senate agreed to delegate both the identification of a suitable election date and the appointment of Returning Officers for the election of a new Rector to the University Secretary.

### Pension Scheme Valuations

The Principal reflected on the difficulties faced by both the local (UoDSS) and national (USS) pensions schemes in light of the actuarial valuations being carried out during the current year. He noted the challenges were considerable and that consultations on changes to contributions and benefits would cause anxiety for many staff.

The Principal emphasised that the scale of potential increases to employee and employer contributions was a cause of concern across the sector and that there was some recognition that an overly cautious approach from the Regulator could exacerbate the challenges. He acknowledged that the situation would cause great anxiety and explained that the University community would need to face the challenges ahead together.

### Covid-19 Pandemic

The Principal expressed his disappointment over a recent Covid-19 outbreak that had been linked to illegal student parties taking place in private residences in Dundee. He reported that while the University had not recorded any cases in its own residences there had been 97 confirmed cases traced back to student gatherings at the time of the meeting.

The Principal emphasised that its partnership with the public health authorities had been excellent and that the University would continue to work in close co-operation to help with efforts to contain the outbreak.

The Principal agreed that the behaviour of a small number of students had been very poor. He explained that the priority was to ensure that people who needed to be tested came forward and co-operated with the public health authorities. He also agreed on the need for students to be given a clear message on the unacceptability of organising and attending illegal gatherings.

**The Senatus decided:**

to note the Report.

## 3. TABLED QUESTIONS

The Senatus received a tabled question on the decision to postpone the introduction of the new Academic Promotions Process due to begin in January 2021.

The Director of Human Resources explained that the Promotions round did take place in 2020 despite concerns about the University's financial position due to the Covid-19 pandemic disruption. She explained that UEG had decided to postpone the 2021 process to ensure that staff were not disadvantaged in any application due to the negative impact of the pandemic.

Senate noted that the decision to postpone the promotions round was informed by reports that staff needed more time to prepare after the disruption to teaching and research. The Director explained that UEG would welcome views on when the process should be resumed.

The Principal reassured Senate that UEG were actively reviewing the current situation and that decisions would be taken to help ensure fairness and balance in the context of financial constraints.

Members of Senate observed that recognition was just as important as financial reward in academic promotions and that other groups of staff had fallen behind in terms of pay and opportunities for promotion.

Members also argued for greater clarity on timing and processes, especially for those staff who were already at an advanced stage of preparation. Members discussed the feasibility of mechanisms for postponing or deferring remunerations associated with promotions in the short term.

Members of Senate expressed support for a balanced approach and an equal focus on the lowest paid staff in the University. Members also suggested that senior staff should consider ways to demonstrate moral leadership and solidarity with staff in the context of unprecedented challenges.

Senate welcomed the intention of UEG to bring forward proposals as soon as practicable.

#### 4. UNIVERSITY COURT

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to note the Report.
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#### 5. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021

The Senatus received a Presentation on the Research Excellence Framework 2021 from the Vice-Principal (Research, Knowledge Exchange & Wider Impact).

The Vice-Principal explained that the University's research community were in the final stages of preparation for the 31 March REF submission deadline. He noted that the submission related to a census period covering the previous six years and would be part of the evidence base for a national audit of research output that was intended to measure quality, size and power.

The Vice-Principal explained that REF had important Implications for reputation, recognition and funding. He noted that it was used by the Scottish Funding Council to calculate the Research Excellence Grant allocation and other formula driven funding streams for research infrastructure development. He emphasized the scale and importance of REF-outcome derived funding for the University's financial well-being.

The Vice-Principal reflected on the University's performance in previous REF/Research Assessment Exercises that had seen the institution placed well within the national top 40 overall. He explained that in the most recent REF the University had been in the top 30 (grade point average) and top 35 for the research power metric.

The Vice-Principal explained that institutional strategy for REF 2021 had focused on maximising research staff eligibility, optimising units of assessment and setting a high-quality threshold. He noted that this had produced a REF 2021 submission based on fewer stronger units but with almost all eligible staff contributing at least one very high-quality research output for inclusion. He noted the use of the Annual Review of Research (ARR) and external critical friends to provide calibration in quality assessments.

The Vice-Principal noted that REF 2021 would place greater weighting on research impact and environment assessments. He explained that the University's submission had been designed to take account of this change of emphasis. He observed that the University's strengths in areas such as public engagement and interdisciplinary research had produced compelling impact case studies for inclusion in the submission.

The Vice-Principal concluded that the University's REF 2021 submission was founded on solid and robust data and processes. He expressed his optimism for a positive outcome for the University and thanked staff for their collective efforts.

In response to questions from members of Senate the Vice-Principal confirmed that research output quality assessments that were compiled for the REF submission would not be repurposed and acknowledged natural variations in the expression of qualitative judgements made in different disciplines.

The Principal thanked the University's REF Team on behalf of Senate and emphasised the importance of a good outcome on academic reputation. He observed that the University's submission was the result of a very rigorous and well-coordinated process.

The Principal agreed that it was likely there would be a general shift upwards in research output quality across the UK, given that all institutions would seek to maximise their results. He noted that the Funding Council likely would amend their gearing of resource allocation methods in line with these movements and concluded that performance relative to peers would be a critical factor in determining the overall impact of REF 2021 on the research economy.

The Vice-Principal confirmed that his presentation could be shared internally for information and that all elements of the REF submission would be shared across the institution in due course.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to record its thanks to Dr Clive Randall (REF and Research Policy Manager) for leading work on the University's REF submission as well as to the wider research support team.
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## 6. ACADEMIC WORKLOADS

The Senatus received a Report on actions and proposals for managing workloads from the Director of Human Resources.

The Director explained that the University Executive Group were extremely sympathetic to the challenges faced by staff. She noted that UEG were looking for ways to support staff during the pandemic and promote sensible working.

Senate noted that staff were invited to suggest practical measures to help manage workloads and to propose areas of activity that could be scaled down or suspended during the pressures of the pandemic.

The Director reported that it had proven difficult to identify areas or activities that could be stopped and suggested that improvements to the way staff worked might help reduce pressure of workloads.

Members of Senate noted that conversations between staff and their managers, including during the Objective Setting and Review (OSAR) process needed to focus on how best to ease workload pressures.

Members also noted that an increase in the number and frequency of online meetings had contributed to workload pressures. It was suggested that strategies to prioritise and limit the number of meetings should be developed and shared with staff. Members also suggested that a clear rationale, set of objectives and careful identification of essential attendees would help staff prioritise and reduce the overall number of meetings.

Members of Senate welcomed the opportunity to ask staff about workload management and to avoid a top-down perspective dominating discussions in this area.

Members recognised that student support and guidance needs have increased during the move to online and blended learning. Members also acknowledged that any measures to reduce workload would be less effective in areas where staff were already working beyond capacity. Some members expressed doubts that workload modelling was an effective tool to help the current situation due to a lack of accuracy and transparency.

It was suggested that as many of the time-costs associated with the move to blended learning had already been absorbed there could be an overall reduction in workload in future years as digital provision, once established, could be much more efficient.

Members of Senate also noted that many of the problems reported by staff seemed to be related to morale rather than workload, that there needed to be flexibility to develop local solutions, that there was a need for more co-ordination of requests arising from central processes and full recognition of the very wide range of duties carried out by academic staff not currently recognised in workload allocations.

The Director of Human Resources noted the suggestion for draft guidance on the rationalisation of meetings. The Director agreed to revisit the existing guidance on the conduct of Objective Setting and Review meetings to ensure that these continue to reflect current needs.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to note that further ideas on managing workloads and activities which could be delayed or stopped, would be circulated to managers and staff.
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## 7. CONVENER'S REPORTS

The Senatus received Reports from the conveners of Senate committees, for information.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to note the Reports.
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## 8. STUDENT TERMS & CONDITIONS 2021-22

The Senatus received the standard Terms and Conditions for Applicants and Students 2021-22 for approval, on a substantially as presented basis.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	for its part, to approve the Student Terms & Conditions 2021-22, on a substantially as presented basis.
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**9. STAFF COUNCIL (PRINCIPAL'S QUESTIONS)**

The Senatus received a Report from the Staff Council (Principal's Questions) meeting held on 3 March 2021, for information.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to note the Report.
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**10. ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2021-22**

The Senatus received the draft Academic Calendar 2021/22, for information.

**11. REVIEW OF SENATE EFFECTIVENESS 2021**

The Senatus received proposals for a Review of Senate Effectiveness, for information.

**12. DUSA ELECTIONS**

To note the timetable for DUSA Executive Election in Semester 2.

Nominations Open	15 March 2021
Nominations Close	9 April 2021
Voting Opens	15 April 2021
Voting Closes	21 April 2021
Results Announced	23 April 2021

**13. PROFESSOR EMERITUS**

Subject to the concurrence of Court, to confer the title of Professor Emeritus upon

**Professor Mary Renfrew**

**14. GRADUATION SUMMER 2021**

To note that online graduation ceremonies will be held from 12-16 July 2021.

**15. QUALITY & ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Senatus received a Report from Quality & Academic Standards Committee meeting held on 11 February 2021.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to approve the Report.
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**16. INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE**

The Senatus received a Report from the International Committee meeting held on 4 March 2021.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to approve the Report.
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**17. RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE**

The Senatus received a Report from the Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting held on 4 March 2021.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to approve the Report.
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**18. LEARNING & TEACHING COMMITTEE**

The Senatus received a Report from the Learning & Teaching Committee meeting held on 9 March 2021.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to approve the Report.
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**19. SUMMARY REPORTS OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

The Senatus received Summary Reports from School Boards.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to approve the Reports.
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**20. UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

The Senatus received a Report from the University Committee on Academic Misconduct meeting held on 12 February 2021.

<b>The Senatus decided:</b>	to approve the Report.
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### APPENDIX 3

#### AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MINUTES (Minute 67 (1)(i))

A meeting of the Committee was held on 2 March 2021 via TEAMS online meeting.

Present: Keith Winter (Convener);  
Karen Bassett;  
Tricia Bey;  
Lady Lynda Clark; and  
Colin Clunie.

In Attendance:

Wendy Alexander	Vice Principal (International);
Richard Bint	Convener of the Finance & Policy Committee;
Dr Neale Laker	Director of Academic & Corporate Governance;
James Lucas	KPMG (Senior Manager);
Barry McGann	Programme Manager (Items 9 and 10);
Dr Jim McGeorge	University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer;
Dr Christine Milburn	Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance);
Dr Jonathan Monk	Director of UoDIT (Item 7(1));
Olaf Postola	Corporate Governance Support Officer;
Olga Potopova	EY (Manager);
Carol Prokopyszyn	Director of Finance;
Wesley Rennison	Director of Strategic Planning (Item 7(2));
Dr Liz Rogers	Policy Officer (Risk & Audit); and
Neil Thomas	KPMG (Partner).

Apologies: Stephen Reid EY(Partner).

#### 1. MINUTES

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes from the meeting of 25 January 2021.

#### 2. MATTERS ARISING

(1) [Action Log](#)

The Committee noted and approved the log of ongoing actions.

**Resolved:** to approve the action log.

#### 3. CONVENER'S REPORT

The Convener provided the Committee with an overview of his activities since its last meeting and, in doing so, highlighted his involvement in discussions relating to the Academic Excellence and Structure (AES) project, as set out at the meeting of the Court on 23 February 2021. He also reminded members that the consultation on proposed changes to the University of Dundee Superannuation Scheme (UoDSS) was to open on 15 March 2021.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 4. COVID-19 RISK REGISTER

The Committee reviewed the updated COVID-19 Risk Register. Members discussed the risks which the University had been able to control through mitigation and, conversely, the areas which were beyond its control. In particular, members noted that officers were tracking an increasing level of risk associated with external factors. Members suggested that in future risk registers should identify which risks could not be mitigated by the University.

Officers highlighted changes to the COVID-19 Risk Register since the January meeting, and members enquired if any further action could be taken in areas where the risks had increased - specifically those relating to IT resilience, staff workloads and the student experience. The Committee discussed how the impact of COVID-19 on peoples' lives outside work might contribute to staff stress and workload levels, and also noted the financial risk relating to students seeking rent and tuition fee rebates.

**Resolved:** to note the update and highlight suggested amendments to future COVID-19 Risk Register reports.

## 5. INSTITUTIONAL RISK REGISTER

The Committee considered the Institutional Risk Register as set out (link available [here](#)). As with the COVID-19 Risk Register, members suggested potential amendments to the report for the future. Discussions focused on how action owners were able to inform the register and the role of the Risk Management Oversight Group in identifying emergent risks and communicating risk actions to local levels.

In response to questions regarding the management of actions on the Institutional Risk Register, the Committee noted that the Policy Officer (Audit & Risk) continued to work with each member of the University Executive Group (UEG) to monitor their respective risk actions. Members suggested that, in addition to the actions provided within the existing Risk Register, it would be helpful if officers were to also provide a short narrative highlighting any specific changes, topics and risk areas that it would be valuable for the Committee to consider.

**Resolved:** to endorse the Institutional Risk Register to the Court for approval and to note suggested amendments to future reports as set out above.

## 6. EXTERNAL AUDIT: INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY COURT

The Committee noted the external auditor's final opinion which had been provided as a report to the Court on the 23 February 2021. The external auditor informed the Committee that no amendments had been made since its consideration by the Committee at its last meeting on 25 January 2021 and was therefore provided for information. Members asked that a formal copy, signed by EY be circulated to the Committee for good order.

**Resolved:** (i) to circulate the final report from EY to the Committee; and  
(ii) otherwise, to note the final opinion.

## 7. INTERNAL AUDIT

### (1) Cyber review

The internal auditors introduced their report on cyber security which focused in the main on the leadership, governance, resilience, human factors and third-party processes relating to cyber security. The report included a review of the University's Information Security framework and the governance structures in place relating to cyber security. The Committee noted that the report consisted of four high-priority recommendations, and one of low-priority. The auditors highlighted that the cyber landscape was a constantly evolving environment and brought emerging risks which required constant monitoring and investment. Members noted that the recommendations and associated actions had been agreed with management and included in the UoDIT operational plan.

In response to questions regarding how the University's performance in this area compared to others in the sector, the Director of UoDIT informed members that the University had scored highly in Scottish Government Cyber Resilience Framework metrics and that its response balanced risk, benefit and cost. Members discussed the due dates for the implementation of the agreed actions and the internal auditor reassured members that timelines were appropriate. The Committee discussed the broader topic of cyber security, and the Director of UoDIT highlighted activity to make improvements to IT systems beyond those captured in the report, several of which were laid out in the Institutional Risk Register. In responses to questions, the Director explained that mandatory cyber security training had been rolled out to all staff to support the necessary cultural shift.

The Committee went on to discuss risks associated with the potential for a proliferation of systems across the University, and members noted the implementation of the OneUniversity system would be an important factor in mitigating these risks. The Director also outlined the resource available within the University which focused on IT security and undertook to provide a further update to the Committee at its meeting in October 2021.

**Resolved:** to note the report and await further updates in due course.

(2) Strategic Planning

The internal auditor presented the internal audit report on strategic planning, which focused on the management, monitoring and reporting on the delivery of strategic objectives. The internal auditors explained that they used a sample-based approach to review three of the eight University strategic objectives, which included 36 success measures. The Committee noted that the report identified two high-priority recommendations and one of moderate-priority recommendation.

The internal auditors highlighted that through their review and discussions with the University Executive Group and the strategic planning team, it was recognised that the objectives in the strategic plan were not prioritised and, in some cases, the measures set out were too numerous in number and sometimes not measurable. The auditor also told the Committee that they had identified a relative lack of accountability for delivery, and that reporting was not used effectively for measuring success.

The Director of Strategic Planning welcomed the report and members noted that it was seen to be helpful in informing the development of the objectives and KPIs that would be associated with the next University strategy. Members noted the recommendation that interim measures would be implemented for 30 June 2021, and that more substantive measures would be implemented alongside the new University Strategy.

In concluding the discussion, the Committee highlighted the importance of benchmarking and setting realistic and achievable objectives.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

(3) Internal audit progress report

The internal auditors provided the Committee with a report which summarised progress relative to the Annual Internal Audit Plan and the implementation of previous recommendations. The auditors and Committee were satisfied with the progress reported.

The auditors drew members' attention to a small number of older actions where, following discussion, it was recommended that the action be updated to meet the requirements of the current environment. The Committee discussed an action relating to health and safety inspections, and noted that while the development of a database had been delayed inspections were nevertheless taking place. Members noted that the internal auditors would next report on progress at the meeting of the Committee on 20 May 2021.

**Resolved:** to note this update and await further updates in due course.

## 8. 4 YEAR REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Committee considered the finalised methodology and timeline for the 4 Year Review of Committee Effectiveness. In response to questions, officers advised that the questionnaire had been reviewed and amended based on the feedback received. The Committee noted that the questionnaire would be released from 8 March 2021 to 22 March 2021, and that responses would be used to support the development of questions for use in the one-to-one interviews. The Committee approved the proposed list of individuals for interview, and the response to the checklist.

**Resolved:**

- (i) to approve the proposed interviewee list and checklist;
- (ii) to await a draft report at the next meeting on 20 May 2021; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the update.

## 9. BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION (BT) PROJECT UPDATE

The Business Transformation Programme Manager attended the Committee and provided an overview of the progress of the ongoing Business Transformation workstreams. The Committee noted that the Human Resources and Payroll module was at the implementation stage and remained on track relative to the revised plan. The Committee noted that the Business Transformation team was also separately overseeing the implementation of student management systems enhancements outside the TechnologyOne platform.

Turning to governance for the project, the Project Manager informed the Committee that each project maintained a risk log and had a management board which fed into the Programme Steering Committee (the minutes of which were made available to the Court). The Committee noted that the main risks at this time related to staff/vendor risks, in particular the risk that lockdown could further impact on the delivery of projects.

The Convener reminded members that he was a member of the Steering Committee for the Business Transformation programme. In response to questions regarding the longer-term operation of the system, members noted that once all modules had been implemented arrangements would be put in place to ensure that processes were updated, and that new functionality was effectively implemented. In this respect members were reminded of the agreement with the vendor regarding continued support.

In response to questions, the University Secretary confirmed that the vendor was bound by GDPR and that appropriate contracts and agreements were in place to protect University data.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

## 10. UPDATE ON BT LESSONS LEARNED REVIEW

The University Secretary provided the Committee with a preliminary report in response to the Lessons Learned review carried out by EY, which outlined progress on the actions previously agreed. Members noted the progress made to date.

**Resolved:** (i) to await a summary report at the 20 May 2021 meeting; and  
(ii) to note the update.

## 11. RESERVED BUSINESS: LEGAL RISK REPORT

*[Secretary's note: Members should note that this item is considered strictly confidential. The University claims the exemptions in Sections 30b and 30c and 28 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The minute has been redacted and is provided under separate cover and will be published as an appendix to the minute of the Court meeting at which its release is approved.]*

## 12. UPDATE: EFFECTIVENESS OF MANDATORY TRAINING

The Committee received a verbal update from the University Secretary on the effectiveness of mandatory training. Members noted that the training programmes were used to establish and assess a baseline awareness for staff at the University and that, while it was difficult to measure the effectiveness of training, data within the staff surveys was used to inform the approach.

The Committee's questions focused on the response rates for the modules. Members noted that the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion training had higher response rates than Information Security training, with a completion rate of approximately 90% and 78% respectively. Members discussed the process used to manage and encourage participation with mandatory training, and the consequences for individuals who failed to complete mandatory training.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

## 13. BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Committee reviewed a report from the Policy Officer (Risk & Audit) which provided an update on the implementation of the Business Continuity Management framework. The report highlighted how the framework had

been utilised to manage the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic including the use of gold, silver and bronze response teams and outlined how work completed before the outbreak of COVID-19 had enabled the University to manage the outbreak effectively.

Members reviewed the actions agreed in March 2020 for the implementation of the framework, noting where delays had occurred due to the re-focusing of resource on the COVID-19 situation. The Policy Officer (Risk & Audit) informed the Committee that, where there were delays, interim measures were in place, such as the existing crisis communication plan and regular table-top exercises. An exercise had been facilitated recently by Higher Education/Further Education Shared Technology & Information Services (HEFESTIS) with the University Executive Group on cyber security. In response to questions, the Officer informed Members that all Schools and Directorates had robust business continuity plans in place and that these continued to be reviewed on a regular basis. A 'lessons learned' review had been carried out with the Gold team, and the Committee encouraged officers to continue to consider responses across the sector.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 14. CASH COLLECTION

Members discussed a recent newspaper article on money laundering risks arising from universities receiving large quantities of cash. The Director of Finance reassured the Committee that the University regularly reviewed its financial regulations and that the regulations were next going to be considered by the Finance & Policy Committee on 25 May 2021. She also confirmed that the University was currently operating on a 'cashless' basis.

**Resolved:** to note the position of the University.

#### 15. NARRATIVE FOR COURT

It was agreed that the Convener's report to Court on the 27 April 2021 would include reference to the following: discussions on the Institutional and COVID-19 Risk Registers; the first substantive internal audit reports from KPMG, the high quality of these reports and the positive engagement with officers; the plans for the four yearly Review of Committee Effectiveness which would commence on the 8 March 2021; the Committee's continued oversight of the Business Transformation programme and the update the Committee had received setting out management's response to the Lessons Learned report from EY; the update on mandatory training; and the progress report on the implementation of the University's Business Continuity Management Framework.

#### 16. HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the minutes from the meeting on 7 December 2020.

**Resolved:** to note the minutes.

#### 17. RISK MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT GROUP

The Committee noted the minutes from the meeting on 9 February 2021.

**Resolved:** to note the minutes.

#### 18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**Resolved:** Thursday 20 May 2021, 2pm.

Keith Winter  
Convener



## APPENDIX 4

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
(Minute 67 (2))

A meeting of the Committee was held on 23 March 2021 via video conference.

Present: Richard Bint (Convener);  
Alan Bainbridge;  
Ronald Bowie;  
Dr William Boyd;  
David Dorward;  
Professor Iain Gillespie (Principal & Vice-Chancellor);  
Professor Mairi Scott; and  
Sharon Sweeney.

In Attendance: Bernadette Malone (Deputy Chair of Court);  
Keith Winter (Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee);  
Wendy Alexander (Vice-Principal (International))(item 5);  
Professor Julian Blow (Interim Vice-Principal (Academic Planning & Performance));  
Peter Fotheringham (Deputy Director of Finance);  
Professor Blair Grubb (Vice-Principal (Education)) (item 3);  
Rose Jenkins (Director of Estates & Campus Services);  
Dr Neale Laker (Director of Academic & Corporate Governance);  
Dr Jim McGeorge (University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer);  
Dr Christine Milburn (Policy Officer (Corporate Governance));  
Carol Prokopyszyn (Director of Finance);  
Wesley Rennison (Director of Strategic Planning);  
Professor John Rowan (Vice-Principal Research, Knowledge Exchange & Wider Impact);  
and  
Thomas Veit (Director of External Relations) (item 5).

Apologies: Scott Quinn (DUSA President).

## 1. MINUTES

(1) Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee on 19 January 2021

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes of the meeting of 19 January 2021.

(2) Reserved Business: Minute 6 of the meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee on 19 January 2021

*[Secretary's note: The Director of Academic & Corporate Governance declared a conflict of interest as a member of the UoDSS Board of Trustees. He did not receive papers for this item.]*

**Resolved:** for its part, to approve the minutes of the meeting of 19 January 2021.

## 2. MATTERS ARISING

(1) Action Log

Members noted the action log for the Committee.

**Resolved:** to approve the action log.

### 3. TEACHING EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS AND EXCELLENCE

The Vice-Principal (Education) presented a progress update on the Teaching Efficiency work-stream of the Academic Excellence & Structure programme. Members noted that a total of £8.5 million savings were attributed to the overall AES project, with £2.5 million linked to teaching and research efficiency savings.

Members noted that the teaching efficiency savings project had thus far focussed on the removal of modules where low numbers of students were being recruited and their continuation was not justified in other ways, but that work had begun on a wider review of how the University might better manage school portfolios and programme structure/module optionality, with the aim of improving programme coherence and reducing workloads.

The Vice-Principal set out the process for the review of modules and members noted that academic colleagues within the schools had identified a total of 228 modules (out of 2233 listed in the University of Dundee module catalogue (10.2%)) for deletion in the 2021/22 academic year with an estimated cost saving of £1,374,072. In response to questions the Vice-Principal outlined the spread of modules across the schools and members noted that the varying levels were a product of how focussed and efficient the module offerings were to begin with.

The Director of Finance confirmed that the savings had been built into school budgets and that the Deans would be held accountable for the delivery of these. The Committee recognised that this would be challenging and discussed the complexity of the process to turn the module reductions into actual cost savings, which may by their nature include staff cost reductions. In response to questions, the Interim Vice-Principal (Academic Planning & Performance) clarified the broad range of interconnected measures which would be considered and reiterated that the Redundancy Avoidance Policy would be followed.

In response to questions the Committee was reminded that, as set out in the Court paper of 23 February 2021, teaching and research cost savings were being sought from across the breadth of the University. The Principal also reminded members that curriculum review was a normal business process undertaken regularly by all universities and that some of the headroom created through the discontinuation of unsustainable programmes/modules would enable the University to grow through the market-led development of sustainable modules and programmes.

**Resolved:** to note the paper.

### 4. PROGRESS WITH FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Deputy Director of Finance updated the Committee on the key changes impacting on the University's path to financial sustainability in the context of the budget setting process for 2021/22 and re-financing requirements. Members reviewed the financial risks set out and noted that the 2020/21 financial outturn showed a significant improvement on the COVID-19 impacted budget.

The Committee discussed the level of financing required to support future strategic capital and/or revenue investment and was supportive of the capital ambition and outlook presented, and in particular the proposed investment in the emerging digital campus strategy. Members noted that further investigation was required to establish what should/should not be included in the budget submitted to the Court in June, but that it was proposed that an investment of ~£32m in digital campus activities over a five-year period be used in initial discussions with banks when discussing the extension/renewal of the existing £40m revolving credit facility which was due to expire in May 2022.

The Committee discussed the importance of investing in the University's digital capabilities in terms of being competitive and able to offer a consistently high quality of experience irrespective of the student location. Members were pleased to note that the proposed investment would focus on not only the learning and teaching experience, but also staff training, development and technologies to facilitate the connectivity of staff. Turning to the University's cash profile, members noted that investment would be dependent on securing borrowing beyond May 2022. Members also discussed consequences for estates requirements and noted that officers would develop a business case based on clearly articulated options. and appropriately referenced within the Institutional Risk Register.

**Resolved:** to endorse the ambition and outlook as set out.

## 5. INTERNATIONAL MARKET: RISKS AND CHALLENGES

The Vice-Principal (International) and Director of External Relations presented a reflective report on risks and challenges relating to international student recruitment. The report provided context for future budget setting discussions and assessed the scale of national and local challenges arising primarily from stronger government regulations, differing global and UK COVID-19 arrangements (e.g. quarantine) and international travel restrictions.

The Vice-Principal highlighted the scale of the University's international recruitment ambition as built into the five-year budget trajectory, including the commitment to double international fee income in the period from 2019/20 to 2024/25. In doing-so, she drew members' attention to risk factors outwith the University's control, and mitigating actions which the University was taking to minimise the scale of this risk.

In response to questions the Vice-Principal and Director detailed the fast-changing student search business model, and the importance of sustained recurrent investment.

The Committee explored the data provided in relation to the recruitment trajectory, and the selling points for the University of Dundee. Returning to discussions in minute 4 (above) the Committee also noted the importance of improving the digital capabilities of the University and providing a 'digital campus experience'. The Committee also discussed the importance of market-led product development (see also minute 3 above), and in particular the impact of internship/professional qualifications and programmes with high employability rates on recruitment levels.

**Resolved:**

- (i) to thank the Vice-Principal (International) and Director of External Relations for the overview and await further discussions at the meeting of the Committee on 25 May, at which time the budget and 5-year plan would be presented; and
- (ii) to ask that the Committee's thanks to the recruitment and admissions team for their hard-work and achievements throughout the COVID-19 pandemic be noted.

## 6. DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT

The Director of Finance provided her regular report, which set out the latest position in relation to key financial risks including updates on: cash/financing, international tuition fees, COVID-19 pandemic costs relating to the School of Dentistry, the Universities Superannuation Scheme, the University of Dundee Superannuation Scheme, and cost/productivity savings as detailed in the plan for 2020/21.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

## 7. ESTATES & CAMPUS SERVICES REPORTS

The Committee considered the regular update from the Director of Estates & Campus Services, which on this occasion focused on the level of on-campus activity and an overview of the 2020/21 capital plan in the context of the Estate Strategy. The Director advised members that the capital works programme had resumed, and that a number of tenders had been resubmitted due to rising costs relating to BREXIT, disruption to supply chains/labour supply, and risks relating to potential COVID-19 project disruption. Members noted that the associated increase to costs was being effectively managed within the budgets available.

The Director drew members' attention to key/critical projects and the movement in budget allocations. She also highlighted activity in relation the Tay Cities Deal projects and in particular the innovation hub development proposed for the Dundee Technopole site. The Committee expressed an interest in further information with regard to the vision for the technopole site and the Director undertook to include this in a future report.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

**8. QUARTER 2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee considered the 2020/21 Quarter 2 management accounts. Members noted that the full year forecast was for an operating deficit of £7.6m, £7.7m ahead of budget and an improvement of £4.0m on the deficit forecast at Period 5. The cash at the end of Period 6 was £51.4m. Members noted that the tuition fee forecast was at this stage conservative and that there may be improvements in some areas. However the Director cautioned that significant risks remained in relation to residence fees and other income areas that were affected by COVID-19 uncertainty.

**Resolved:** to note the accounts.

**9. BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION EFFICIENCIES AND BENEFITS**

The University Secretary provided members with an update on the business benefits arising from the Business Transformation programme to date. The Committee was reminded that while the overall programme remained within budget, it has not delivered to the original timescales and that implementation had been very challenging - with the student element halted in September 2020. The Finance element of the system had been implemented in August 2019 and the report focused on benefits and efficiencies in this area, however the Committee also noted that the Research and HR/Payroll elements were scheduled to go live later in 2021, and business process advancements in these areas and in relation to student operations were referenced in the report. With regard to the Finance module, the report set out systems-related, management information, staffing, and procurement benefits relative to the original business case as well as reductions in bureaucracy. The University Secretary also drew members' attention to future developments within the programme.

Through discussion, members noted the transformational nature of the changes in terms of data access and reporting. Members highlighted the importance of this in terms of understanding and managing staff numbers at a critical time for the University. Members were reassured that the level of on-going investment in systems was sufficient to ensure that they were appropriately optimised. In response to questions the Director of Finance clarified how the projected savings were allocated in terms of school/directorate budgets.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

**10. TRAC RETURN**

The Committee received the TRAC return for 2019/20 and approved its submission. The Deputy Director of Finance presented key elements of the submission and members noted that a further paper exploring the findings and benchmarking data was scheduled for consideration by the Committee later in the year. Members noted the impact of COVID-19 on cost recovery rates and the Deputy Director informed members that a six-month extension had been granted for the continued use of previous rates to ensure that institutions were not unduly penalised as a result of the pandemic.

Members expressed an interest in understanding the levers to improve the return and noted that if the University were to make a surplus it would increase the permitted level of cost recovery. The Committee also noted that a Research Excellence & Efficiency work stream had been established as part of the Academic Excellence and Structure Programme, and that an update on this work would be provided to its next meeting on 25 May 2021.

**Resolved:** to approve the submission and await analysis and benchmarking in due course.

**11. NARRATIVE FOR COURT**

The Committee agreed to highlight to the Court discussions relating to international markets, the Committee's support for the capital ambition and outlook regarding digital campus developments, and the quarter 2 management accounts.

**Resolved:** to ask that the Convener highlight these matters in his report to Court.

**12. RESERVED BUSINESS: BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION MINUTES**

*[Secretary's note: The Committee considered the item as reserved business. The University asserts that the paper is exempt from public disclosure and claims exemptions in S.30(b), 30(c) and 33(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.]*

The Committee noted that the minutes from meetings of the Business Transformation Steering Group on 18 December 2020 and 29 January 2021 had been made available to all members of the Court via the [Court One-Drive area](#).

**Resolved:** to note the minutes.

**13. RESEARCH GRANT APPROVALS**

The Committee noted the regular report of research grant awards since the last meeting. The trends comparison chart for research awards indicated that to date the value of awards in 2020/21 (£24.4m) had now returned to a level similar to the previous year at the same period and that 55% of grants submitted in the period to date were from the Schools of Medicine and Life Sciences. Applications directly relating to coronavirus or Covid-19 continued to be made from across the Schools of Health Sciences, Medicine, Life Sciences, Education and Social Work and Social Sciences, with application values ranging from £4k to £364k. Awards of note in the period included a Wellcome Trust award of £1.5m to Dr Henry McSorely, School of Life Sciences; an industry award of £480k to Professor James Chalmers, School of Medicine and a BBSRC award of £328k in relation to COVID research to Professor Ulrich Zachariae, School of Life Sciences.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

**14. FOLLOW-UP TO TRAC QUERY**

The Committee received a paper from the Director of Finance which provided further detail in relation to queries raised at a previous meeting regarding the University's TRAC position relative to the University's TRAC peer group, specifically the relationship between TRAC cost recovery and the reported surplus/deficit in the financial statements.

**Resolved:** to note the report and to encourage the University to continue to raise concerns regarding the impact of the MSI calculation with sector bodies.

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** to note that the next meeting would take place on 25 May 2021.

Richard Bint  
(Convener)

## APPENDIX 5

### GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Minute 67 (3))

A meeting of the Committee was held on 23 March 2021 by videoconference.

Present: Ronald Bowie (Convener);  
Janice Aitken;  
Jia Hui (Gigi) Gan (item 4(2) onward);  
Principal, Professor Iain Gillespie;  
Bernadette Malone;  
Jane Marshall;  
Ron Mobed; and  
Professor Mairi Scott.

In Attendance: Professor Blair Grubb (Vice-Principal (Education));  
Dr Neale Laker (Director of Academic & Corporate Governance);  
Dr Jim McGeorge (University Secretary); and  
Dr Christine Milburn (Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance)).

#### 1. MINUTES

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes of the meeting of 19 January 2021.

#### 2. MATTERS ARISING

(1) Action Log

The Committee received an action log summarising progress in relation to outstanding actions from previous meetings. The Director of Academic & Corporate Governance updated members on the timing of the Senate Review of Effectiveness and members noted that two of the actions from the Quinquennial Review of the Effectiveness of the Court had now been scheduled for discussion at the meeting in August 2021, by which time the report from the Senate Review was expected to be available.

**Resolved:** to note the log and await further updates regarding the timing of the Senate review of effectiveness.

#### 3. CONVENER'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report from the Convener (also the Chair of Court) on his activities and interactions at a sectoral level which were of relevance to its business.

The Convener informed the Committee of the resignation of the Rector with immediate effect due to a change in his commitments and availability following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee wished the Rector well in his future endeavours. The Director of Academic & Corporate Governance outlined the regulations for the election of the Rector and members noted the intention to hold the election before the end of July 2021.

The Committee discussed the Court briefing session with Mike Cantlay, Chair of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on 18 March 2021. Members indicated that the session had been useful, particularly in building the relationship with the SFC and enhancing the understanding of the Court of sectoral issues. The Committee suggested that the Chair of Court explore if the session could be repeated at six-monthly intervals and noted that this approach would fit well with the Principal's development of a stakeholder engagement plan.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

4. **SECTORAL UPDATE**(1) Report of the Review of the CUC HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code

The Committee noted that the Secretariat had considered the recommendations from the Review of the CUC HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code and had concluded that no further action was required from the University, but noted areas where the Remuneration Committee was to be asked to consider the potential to further enhance practice. Members were reminded that the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance (2017) took precedence in Scottish universities, and that it was regarded as more stringent than the CUC HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code.

**Resolved:** to note the conclusions of the review and ask that the Remuneration Committee consider the report.

(2) Free Speech and Academic Freedom

The Director of Academic & Corporate Governance drew members' attention to the publication of the [Department for Education paper on Free Speech and Academic Freedom](#). The Committee noted the growing attention and pressure on free speech and academic freedom, and while it was noted that the University had not intervened to prevent events taking place, members were keen that the University established an early position and suggested that officers establish a working group to consider the implications of the report and the direction of travel indicated.

The Director also told the Committee that the Secretary of State for Education in the UK Government, Gavin Williamson, had written to Vice-Chancellors in England instructing them to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. Members noted that the University Executive Group (UEG) had agreed to consult on the adoption of the definition and that the University would report on this in the near future.

**Resolved:** to encourage the University to actively explore its position on free speech and academic freedom, and to otherwise note that updates would be provided in due course.

(3) Independent QC-Led Reports from University of Strathclyde and Heriot-Watt University

The Director of Academic & Corporate Governance drew members' attention to reports from independent QC-led reviews into the handling of sexual misconduct complaints at the University of Strathclyde and Heriot-Watt University. He also outlined the call from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for universities to review their policies and procedures that related to the key findings and recommendations from these reports. Members noted that the University had established a group, led by the Director of Legal, to undertake this review and that an update would be provided to the Court via the Principal's report to the Court in April 2021.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

5. **CONVENERSHIP OF THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

The Convener updated the Committee on his discussions with a potential candidate for the role of Convener of the Remuneration Committee from 1 August 2021, that being when the current Convener of the Remuneration Committee would reach her maximum term of office on the Court.

The Committee noted that Karen Thomson had expressed an interest and willingness to take on this Convenership. The Committee was satisfied that Karen possessed the skills, attributes and experience desirable for the role and recommended to the Court that she be appointed to the role from 1 August 2021, but that she attend meetings of the Committee in a shadow capacity with immediate effect to ensure a smooth transition of business.

**Resolved:** to recommend to the Court that Karen Thomson be appointed as the Convener of the Remuneration Committee from 1 August 2021.

## 6. UPDATE ON DEPUTY CHAIR AND SENIOR INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF COURT PROCESS

The Committee noted that at the deadline for expressions of interest in the position of Senior Independent Member (SIM) of Court, one candidate, Jane Marshall, had come forward. The returning officer for the election confirmed that the candidate was eligible for the role and as such declared that Jane had been duly elected to the position effective from 1 August 2021. Members noted that a statement would be issued to the Court later that day. The Committee noted that the election was for a period of 4 years in the first instance, but that since Jane would reach the end of her maximum term of office on Court on 31 July 2023, an election would be held in early 2023 to identify a successor.

Turning to the appointment of a Deputy Chair of Court to succeed Bernadette Malone at the end of her term of office on Court on 31 July 2021, members noted that at the deadline for expressions of interest one candidate had submitted an application. Noting the procedures previously approved by the Court, the Committee recommended that as only one application had been received a sub-group of the Committee, with a lay, staff and student member, should meet with the candidate to informally explore their understanding of and suitability for the role, and for the views of this group to be shared with the Court alongside the application.

- Resolved:**
- (i) to note the election of Jane Marshall as the SIM for the period 1 August 2021 – 31 July 2023; and
  - (ii) to note that at the deadline for expressions of interest in the role of Deputy Chair of Court one application had been received, and that a sub-group of the Governance & Nominations Committee would meet with the candidate to explore informally the candidate's understanding of and suitability for the role prior to the circulation of information to the Court.

## 7. UPDATE ON COMPLETION OF MANDATORY TRAINING MODULES

The Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance) provided an update on completion rates for Court members in relation to the mandatory Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Information Security modules. The Court was satisfied with Equality, Diversity & Inclusion module completion, but were concerned that the Information Security Module completion rate remained low. The Committee reiterated the importance of information security in the modern age and recommended that the Chair of Court personally contact those who were yet to complete the modules.

- Resolved:** to note that the Chair of Court would contact members individually with regard to outstanding modules, and otherwise to await a further report.

## 8. EARLY STAGE COURT BUSINESS

The Committee considered and provided input into an early draft of the agenda for the Court on 27 April 2021. Discussions focused on options for the pre-Court meeting session. Members noted that the University Executive Group (UEG) had significantly progressed its thinking in relation to its priorities and agreed that it would be useful to ensure that the Court was up to date in this respect ahead of the Court strategic session on 24 May 2021. Members also suggested that the Court should be encouraged to provide guidance on success criteria and risk appetite in relation to the development of the new University Strategy, and members encouraged officers to provide information in advance to inform these discussions.

- Resolved:** to note the draft agenda.

## 9. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

### (1) Officers Returns 2020/21

The Director of Academic & Corporate Governance reminded members of the process for the annual review of register of interest returns by senior officers. Members noted that there was a 94% return rate and that the Director was following up outstanding returns. The Director confirmed that there were no declarations which required discussion by the Committee.



**Resolved:** to note the update and assure the Court that good practice had been followed.

(2) Director of Academic & Corporate Governance – DUSA Trustee Role

*[The Director of Academic & Corporate Governance declared a conflict of interest in relation to the item and left the meeting for the duration of discussions.]*

The University Secretary informed the Committee that the Director of Academic & Corporate Governance had expressed an interest in serving on the Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA) Board of Trustees and that he, the Principal, and the Chair of Court were supportive of this based on the Director's extensive knowledge of both governance and student matters. The Director had however highlighted the potential for conflicts of interest to arise when matters relating to DUSA were considered by the Court. The Committee expressed confidence in the Director's ability to identify and manage these potential conflicts, and in the mutual benefit to DUSA and the University of him serving in this capacity. The Committee further noted that the University Secretary would put arrangements in place to ensure that there was no detriment to the Court in terms of access to advice and guidance.

**Resolved:** to note the potential conflict of interest as set out, and to recommend that the Director proceed with his application for the role.

10. **NARRATIVE FROM THE COMMITTEE TO THE COURT**

The Committee recommended that the Convener highlight to the Court the update on the Senior Independent Member of Court, Deputy Chair of Court, and Remuneration Committee roles. Members also wished to highlight the suggestions for the pre-Court session on 27 April and the importance of members completing their information security modules.

**Resolved:** to recommend that the Convener highlight these areas in his report to the Court.

11. **REPORT ON SUBSIDIARY COMPANY DIRECTORS**

The Committee received the annual report on subsidiary company directors. No concerns or conflicts were raised for noting.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** to note that the next meeting would be held on 25 May 2021.

Ronald Bowie

Convener

## APPENDIX 6

### PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Minute 67 (4))

A meeting of the Committee was held on 15 March 2021.

**Present:** Jane Marshall (Convener);  
Dr William Boyd;  
Jia Hui (Gigi) Gan;  
Professor Lynn Kilbride;  
Bernadette Malone;  
Dr David Martin (item 6(3) onward);  
Marianne Reilly;  
Jay Surti; and  
Karen Thomson.

**In Attendance:** Professor Julian Blow      Interim Vice-Principal (Academic Planning & Performance);  
Dr Jim McGeorge      University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer;  
Pamela Milne      Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development;  
Dr Christine Milburn      Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance);  
Olaf Postola      Corporate Governance Support Officer; and  
Ajit Trivedi      Head of Equality and Diversity (for items 8 and 9).

**Apologies:** Rebecca Leiper; and  
Julie Strachan.

#### 1. TRAINING ON THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF REWARD AND RECOGNITION

The Committee participated in a training session focussed on the University's approach to the strategic priorities of reward and recognition. The session was led by the Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD). The session explored how the grading structure worked at the University; Contributed Related Points (CRPs) for staff at top of their grade; accelerated advancement for those mid-grade; clarity around the process of evaluating eligibility for award; the role of Objective Setting and Review (OSaR); and the new redeveloped academic promotions criteria.

Discussion focused on the percentage of staff who were not eligible to be considered for CRP/Accelerated Advancement rewards, and members discussed the career progression pathways for staff in professional services. The Committee discussed additional non-monetary methods of rewarding staff, and members noted there were processes in place such as academic awards and long service awards to recognise individual achievements. Members noted the substantive development programme run by Organisational & Professional Development (OPD) providing development opportunities for staff, and activities and programmes organised by Student Services and the Centre for Technology & Innovation in Learning (CTIL) for academic staff.

The Committee discussed the importance of mentoring and in response to questions the Director advised that a mentoring scheme was in place at the University. Members noted the impact of the alignment of pay to the living wage in terms of the lower end of the University's grading structure, and that the University would review these once discussions were completed at a national level.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 2. MINUTES

(i) Minutes from the meeting on 21 January 2021.

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes from the meeting.

(ii) Reserved Business minutes 6.(3) from the meeting on 21 January 2021.

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes from the meeting.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING

#### (1) Action Log

The Committee noted the log of ongoing actions and progress against the target completion dates provided.

**Resolved:** to approve the action log as presented.

### 4. CONVENER'S UPDATE

The Convener welcomed Marianne Reilly to the membership of the Committee, before providing her regular update in which she highlighted her activity in support of the strategic business of the Committee, including her attendance of a meeting of the Chair and Conveners of Court Committee at which the agenda for the next meeting of the Court was discussed. She also drew members' attention to the publication of information by the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and the commencement of the consultation process relating to the University of Dundee Superannuation Scheme (UoDSS).

**Resolved:** to note the update.

### 5. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW & SECTORAL UPDATE

#### (1) Report from the Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development

The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development introduced her report and, in doing-so, highlighted a number of topics including progress in relation to the appointment of a Senior Vice-Principal; an update on the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and an update on pay and pensions matters. The Committee noted that the process for the appointment of a Senior Vice-Principal had a closing date for applications of 16 April 2021, with interviews scheduled for 10 June 2021.

In response to questions regarding staff workloads and support for staff during the pandemic, the Director outlined some of the outputs from ongoing discussions with Deans, Directors, staff and the campus unions aimed at identifying activities which could be stopped or delayed to reduce staff workloads, and highlighted planned communications from the University Executive Group (UEG) on this matter. The Committee discussed the effect of COVID-19 on students as highlighted in the student pulse survey and considered the potential impact of the same matters on academic staff. The Director informed members that ideas were being collated from the UMG and work was ongoing in this area.

Turning to pensions matters, the Director drew members' attention to the session held by the University to support staff in understanding the implications of communications from USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme). Members were pleased to note the positive engagement with the session and that the University planned a further session based on feedback and questions from staff. With regard to the University of Dundee Superannuation Scheme (UoDSS), members noted that the consultation process had opened earlier that day, and that information on the proposed new scheme had been sent to all staff who were eligible to be members, in both hardcopy and email. The Committee expressed an interest in an equality impact assessment for the proposed benefits changes, but noted that the University did not wish to pre-empt the outcomes of the consultation and so an assessment would be conducted on the final proposals prior to their submission to the Court for consideration.

The Committee discussed risks associated with the decision taken by the University Executive Group (UEG) to postpone the academic promotions round. Members noted that the delay was currently being evaluated given the University's financial position but also to ensure that academic staff were not unduly disadvantaged by the focus on the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of the preparation of their submissions. Members highlighted the importance of treating staff equally and fairly and noted the intention to also review the merit awards round and senior staff remuneration round before going ahead with them also. The Director reiterated the importance of communication with staff with respect to decisions.

**Resolved:** to note the report

## 6. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

### (1) Absence Management Report 2019/2020

The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development introduced the absence management report, which focused on reviewing absence data within schools and directorates. The Director highlighted that the data had been compared to University & Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) data for benchmarking purposes. She informed members that the implementation of the OneUniversity Human Resources and Payroll module would streamline the online absence reporting process for staff.

On average, 6.1 working days had been lost per annum due to sickness and members noted that this was lower than the national UCEA average for the sector. The Director drew members' attention to the details of the report, and in particular the contribution of mental health and wellbeing related absence, such as stress, to this average. The Director re-iterated the support provided to staff through the work of Occupational Health, Organisational and Professional Development (OPD) and the counselling service.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

### (2) Business Transformation update

The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development provided a verbal update on the progress of the implementation of OneUniversity HR & Payroll module. The Committee noted that the revised plan had been agreed with the vendor, TechnologyOne. At the time of the meeting the implementation was a week behind schedule, but this was not expected have an adverse impact on the go-live plans.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

### (3) Scottish Funding Council – Assessment of Procedures Relating to Sexual Misconduct Complaints.

The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development summarised the findings of reports from the independent QC-led reports commissioned by the University of Strathclyde and Heriot-Watt University into the handling of sexual misconduct complaints. She also outlined the request from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) that all Universities review their procedures against the recommendations made. Members noted that a working group had been set up by the Director of Legal to review these in Dundee's case, and that a report would be submitted to the SFC in due course.

In response to questions regarding current practice at the University, the Director assured members that existing procedures were robust, but that the University would strive to improve practice in line with any learnings from the review.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

## 7. REWARD AND RECOGNITION

### (1) Annual Review (Academic Research and Performance) 2020

The Committee reviewed a summary and analysis of the promotion outcomes arising from the University's Annual Review process for Academic & Research staff in 2020.

The Director of HR & Organisational Development outlined the process including the annual review meetings which members noted were conducted on schedule with the exception of the meetings in September and October 2020, with all the meetings being held virtually. The Committee noted that 2020 was the last year of the old criteria being used for the annual review round. Members noted that the redeveloped criteria would support staff who contributed not only to the traditional areas of teaching and research but also to other activities which supported the University's strategic aims and objectives.

The Committee highlighted the higher proportion of Teaching & Research staff with successful outcomes relative to Teaching & Scholarship staff. The Committee noted that there were more applications in 2020 than in 2019, and overall, the success rate for female staff had been higher than for male applicants. The Committee discussed the proportion of white and BME staff application success rates and noted they were

the same, but there was a higher proportion of white staff applying. Members noted an 80% success rate of applications in relation to staff with a declared disability.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

(2) Merit Awards 2020

The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development provided an update on the Merit awards in 2020, including both Accelerated Advancement (AA) and Contribution Related Points (CRP) and highlighted that the number of rewards had been lower compared to previous years, but that the percentage of successful applications was similar. The Committee discussed data trends in terms of the organisational location and grades of nominated staff, and that the trend was similar to previous years. In response to questions the Director indicated that the process was being reviewed to ensure that the nomination process remained fair and equitable to staff from all schools/directorates and all grades.

The Committee noted that work was ongoing to increase numbers of staff nominated from lower grades especially, with members suggesting that a more self-nomination or 'self-flag' process could be considered to support such staff.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

## 8. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

(1) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Minutes

The Head of Equality and Diversity (ED) provided the Committee with an overview of the minutes and activities and work supporting the EDI agenda, including the work on the Research Excellence Framework, and the implementation of a new EDI module for Post Graduate Research (PGR) students with the support of Doctoral Academy.

Moving onto gender equality and Athena SWAN, members noted that 7 out of the 10 schools had achieved bronze awards and were forming new submissions for renewal against an updated criterion in November 2021.

Discussion focused on the race equality survey launched in November 2020, and members noted that the survey had been developed using guidance from Advance HE and included additional COVID-19 and Black and Minority and Ethnic (BME) questions. The Committee noted the completion rates, which were 29% (876) staff and 3.3% (506) students and members noted a large participation increase from the previous survey conducted in 2017. In addition to the survey, four engagement forums had taken place, two for staff and two for students, and all the results would be captured and presented shortly to the University Executive Group.

The Committee discussed the analysis from the survey and noted that overall, BME members of the University community were more likely to have experienced discrimination of some sort within the city. The Head of ED highlighted that work was ongoing to evaluate how this could be addressed with support from local bodies, including the City Council. The Committee noted that BME staff felt they were not always treated fairly and equally by colleagues, and the Head of ED confirmed that a robust harassment support network was in place and was being embedded into support structures, but had been delayed due to COVID-19. He highlighted that there was an opinion from the survey that overall, the University and the Dundee University Students' Association could do more for international students, and for student mental health. The Head of ED informed members that the feedback from the survey was used to inform the Equality Outcomes Plan 2021 – 2025 and was being fed into the UEG.

In discussing the survey, the Director of HR&OD highlighted that there was a clear difference in perception seen between white staff and BME staff, and that the lived experience between the two cohorts was different. The Committee discussed how a cultural shift could be implemented across the University to address this, and the Head of ED informed members that the University was committed to this and would identify actions and look to build more allies within the community to support change.

In concluding the discussion, Members noted that the UEG was deeply committed to this agenda and tangible actions were being developed to move forward. The University Secretary informed members of a Scotland wide project run by Advance HE, whereby a tool kit had been developed to support HEIs with the Race agenda. He highlighted that the topics of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion were being championed at the Universities Scotland (US) Secretaries' Group and the US Main Committee.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 9. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Head of Equality and Diversity provided an overview of the Public Sector Equality Duty reports. Members noted that in Scotland these were part of an obligatory biannual report which included a mainstreaming report, an outcomes plan, a pay-gap report and an annual staff profile report. The Committee reviewed all the associated reports and welcomed their detailed and comprehensive nature and the level of positive activity and action that had been taken forward since the last report.

He informed the Committee that the composition of the governing body had improved specifically relating to gender balance which was now 54% female, and also increased in relation to other protected characteristics. He provided an overview of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) training, and members noted that the completion rates were 85% against a target of 95%.

Discussion focused on a welcome recent increase of women in grade 10 roles, and an increase of members of the BME community in professorial level positions. Members noted that there had been an increased level of disabled staff in professorial positions and acknowledged the positive work being done in this area. The Committee were reassured of the positive progress made.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 10. COURT NARRATIVE

It was agreed that the Convener's report to Court on 27 April 2021 would include reference to the following: the importance of the University maintaining the provision of support for staff and student welfare during the pandemic; the in-depth discussion on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; the endorsement of the Public Sector Equality Duty report; and the Committee's consideration of how reward matters related to the University strategy.

#### 11. UNION MATTERS

(1) Local Joint Committee Minutes

The Committee noted the minutes from the meeting of the Local Joint Committee on the 16 February 2021.

**Resolved:** to note the minutes.

#### 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**Resolved:** Thursday 19 May 2021

Jane Marshall  
Convener

## APPENDIX 7

### WELFARE & ETHICAL USE OF ANIMALS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Minute 67 (5))

A meeting of the Committee was held on 15th April 2021.

Present:                   The Convenert;  
                                The Director of Biological Services (DBS);  
                                The University Veterinary Surgeon (UVS);  
                                The Training Coordinator (TC);  
                                Three NACWOs;  
                                Four holders of Home Office licences;  
                                and four other members.

#### 1.       **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

These were approved.

#### 2.       **MATTERS ARISING**

*3. Research overseas.* This was discussed further under agenda item 3 below.

*4. Condition 18 reports.* The UVS reported that one condition 18 report had been agreed with the inspector and another was awaiting feedback from the project licence-holder as to monitoring arrangements for the future.

*7. Closure of the MSRU.* The DBS reported as to the options currently being developed to support the work of researchers in the School of Medicine.

#### 3.       **RESEARCH OVERSEAS**

The Committee considered once more a proposal for a UK-funded project to involve work with animals at an establishment in the USA, following further dialogue between the UVS and that establishment. It noted that practices in the USA differed in some important respects from those in the UK but the science appeared to be well-justified, the project had received Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval and the management of each animal would be agreed between the PI and the attending veterinarian.

The Committee agreed that all research collaborations involving animal work to be performed overseas should be reviewed, in order to protect the reputation of the University. No hard and fast rules could apply, as each case would have to be considered on its merits, but some general principles could be established (e.g. the exact role of the local veterinary surgeon, the existence and activity of an IACUC or equivalent body, etc.).

##### **Resolved:**

- To approve the specific project, with following conditions:
  - The Committee must receive regular progress reports (at a frequency to be agreed with the researchers in Dundee and the USA);
  - The Committee must be informed of any changes to the protocols agreed with the local IACUC;
  - The Committee must have sight of any scientific manuscript arising from the work, in order, among other matters, to confirm that the role of the ethical review process in Dundee has been explained correctly.
- To reiterate to researchers at the University the need to seek local ethical review as early as possible in the planning of any relevant collaborative projects.
- At a future meeting, to agree the extent to which a common set of principles could apply to the review of overseas projects.

#### 4.       **COURSE TEACHING OVERSEAS**

A member of academic staff attended in order to brief the Committee about a summer course that she runs at the Woods Hole Marine Laboratory, Cape Cod, USA. This involves the surgical preparation of animals (by her and an

equally experienced colleague) from which a group of students collect data non-invasively. The training element is in the collection and analysis of the data; the students themselves do not perform any procedures on the animals. The data are expected to be novel so, while the primary intent is educational, there is a significant research element and publications have arisen from these data collections in the past. The academic staff member has input into the proposal prepared each year for IACUC approval.

**Resolved:**

- To approve the involvement of the member of staff in the running of this summer course.

**5. USE OF ANIMALS IN 2020**

The DBS summarised a report of the numbers of animals used in 2020. These were significantly lower than in 2019, most likely as a result of the constraints in research activity imposed in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The numbers of animals in breeding programmes that were reported as having actual severities of “Moderate” or “Severe” were even further reduced, but the DBS and UVS agreed that there had been good interactions between care staff, scientists and the UVS in assigning severities and therefore the figures were likely to be more reliable than in previous years.

**6. REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY VETERINARY SURGEON**

(standing agenda item)

- i. One resource unit had been experiencing low humidity recently and there had been evidence of ring-tail in neonatal rodents, almost certainly as a direct result. The humidity levels had since returned to more normal levels;
- ii. A breeding mouse line that had had significant birthing problems was now doing much better. The original cause remained unclear;
- iii. Rats that were to be re-homed were now being given 2-3 sessions in a “play room” to further socialise them in preparation for this event. The socialisation programme had been designed by the NACWO and agreed with the UVS;
- iv. A diabetes study had run into problems associated with the use of streptozotocin to induce diabetes and then the implantation of insulin pellets to control it. Communications between the personal licence-holders and the project licence-holder, UVS and NACWO had not always been effective. A draft condition 18 report had been submitted to the inspector, who had asked for the SOP to be reviewed, the project licence to be amended and a small pilot study to be run when the work re-commences;
- v. The first batch of animals had entered a new rear-limb ischaemia model and appeared to be tolerating it well;
- vi. From her contacts with LAVA, commercial breeders and DEFRA, the UVS was aware of continuing issues with the transport of animals, germ-plasm and animal-derived materials between countries. However, an import of mice into the University from Canada had recently been completed (not without significant issues with the paperwork) and an export to Finland had also been successful (though there had been some subsequent welfare issues associated with the procedures they underwent there);
- vii. The UVS had concerns about the apparently high failure rates with i.v. injections seen in the work of one research group. It was not clear whether these were as a result of competence issues, a need to deliver exactly the intended volume into the vein, difficulties with the vehicles or a combination of these factors.

**Resolved:**

- To approve the socialisation programme for animals due to be re-homed, in line with the relevant condition on the establishment licence;
- The UVS to discuss the iv failure rates with the project licence-holder, to establish whether further training and/or an amendment to the licence might be necessary.

**7. REPORT FROM THE TRAINING COORDINATOR**

(standing agenda item)

- i. Hands-on training had restarted, but still in a very restricted manner, with priority being given to individuals needing it for certification in order to apply for personal licences. Suitably distanced assessments of practical competence were Continuing;



- ii. Since the last meeting of the Committee, 40 DOPS assessments had been carried out and 30 online training modules had been completed. Four members of the University had completed the mandatory training for personal licence applicants, and another for the training required for working with prolonged anaesthesia;
- iii. Three members of the animal care staff have completed their level 3 training in Animal Technology and Science and one has been admitted as a Member of the IAT. One member of staff has completed the course for prospective NACWOs and another an online training course on the management of pain in laboratory animals;
- iv. All current personal licence-holders (save one who has only recently transferred their licence from another establishment) have complete the online training module on the recognition and prevention of pain and distress in laboratory animals. The training coordinator proposed that all personal licence-holders should complete an online training module on the assessment of actual severity before 31 March 2022; This module should also be completed by those who submit study plans, with a suggested deadline of 30 June 2021;
- v. The training coordinator further proposed that those who submit study plans should complete a short course on experimental design, with a deadline to be confirmed;
- vi. Other events for the CPD of colony managers, personal licence-holders and project licence-holders are being planned.

**Resolved:**

- To endorse the proposal for further online training of personal licence-holders and study plan submitters, with the suggested deadlines.

**8. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF BIOLOGICAL SERVICES**

(standing agenda item)

The report from the DBS on licensing matters reviewed. There had been no significant additional issues raised by the inspector in reviewing recent applications for project licences and amendments. The Convenor noted that this confirmed the effectiveness of the Committee in ensuring that applications were complete.

**9. AMENDMENT TO THE REMIT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee approved the proposed clarification that its role is to offer considered opinions on which others in the University are expected to base their decisions. There is therefore no need for there to be a process for appealing against "decisions" made by the University.

**Resolved:**

- To submit the updated document describing the Committee's remit and terms of reference for approval by the University Court.

**10. AOCB**

The Committee discussed the arrangement for whistle-blowing. There was general agreement that the culture was such that individuals should feel confident in making any concerns known. However, the UVS and DBS undertook to bring any future enquiries or complaints that they might be asked to deal with to the Committee in future, so that there can be better understanding of their numbers and resolution.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

15th July 2021.