

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

A meeting of the University Court was held on 21 June 2022 in the Leverhulme Research Institute, City Campus, University of Dundee.

Present: Ronnie Bowie (in the Chair);  
Alan Bainbridge (online);  
Tricia Bey;  
Richard Bint;  
Megan-Rose Birdsall;  
Gregory Colgan;  
Professor Sir Mike Ferguson;  
Professor Iain Gillespie (Principal & Vice-Chancellor);  
Keith Harris;  
Rebecca Leiper;  
Jane Marshall (online);  
Dr David Martin;  
Ron Mobed (online);  
Dr Anna Notaro (online);  
Emma Preston;  
Professor Mairi Scott;  
Karthik Subramanya;  
Jay Surti;  
Sharon Sweeney;  
Karen Thomson (online);  
Dimitris Vidakis (DUSA President); and  
Keith Winter.

In Attendance: Professor Wendy Alexander (Vice-Principal (International));  
Julie Christie (Deputy Director (Change Delivery)) (Pre-Court Briefing);  
Professor Blair Grubb (Vice-Principal (Education));  
Peter Fotheringham (Interim Director of Finance);  
Naomi Jeffery (Head of Strategic Intelligence) (Pre-Court Briefing);  
Dr Neale Laker (Deputy University Secretary);  
Dr Jim McGeorge (University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer);  
Amanda Millar (Chair of Court Elect)  
Dr Christine Milburn (Head of Principal's Office) (online);  
Nyasha Mutembwa (DUSA President Elect);  
Professor Shane O'Neill (Senior Vice-Principal);  
Dr Alison Ramsay (Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance));  
Adam Robertson (Independent Court Member Elect);  
Professor John Rowan (Vice-Principal (Research, Knowledge Exchange & Wider Impact));  
Rebecca Trengove (Director of External Relations); and  
Susan Young (Head of Financial Accounting) (Pre-Court Briefing).

Apologies: Andrew Lothian

## **PRE-COURT BRIEFING**

Prior to the meeting, members received a pre-Court presentation from the Senior Vice-Principal on the current size and shape of the University in order to initiate the Court's discussions on the future direction and composition of the institution. Members noted developments since the Court Retreat in September 2021, including the Academic Excellence and Sustainability framework, the establishment of the new School of Humanities, Social Sciences & Law and, most recently, the launch of the University Strategy 2022-2027 (the Strategy).

Professor O'Neill advised the Court that the successful implementation of the Strategy would achieve academic excellence in education, research and social impact, underpinned by financial sustainability. This would be realised by a shift in academic focus to concentrate efforts in areas of demonstrable strength in teaching and research and the introduction of a reformed planning process intended to enable Schools to take responsibility for their contributions to academic excellence and financial sustainability.

The Court was apprised of current staff and student statistics, projected tuition fee income and overall income trends, as well as predicted contributions by School. Areas of excellence were identified, informed by portfolio reviews to improve financial sustainability and quality of provision. The recent Research Excellence Framework (REF) results would inform, but not dictate, areas for investment and opportunities for recruiting international students would continue to be at the forefront of the institutional vision.

In small groups, the Court was invited to consider: whether the pace of change and future direction were appropriate; how effective the plans for success appeared; the likely risks and issues of concern associated with such an approach; and how the deeper consideration of future size and shape at the Court Retreat in early 2023 should be framed and conducted. In the plenary discussion which followed, members noted the importance of early consultation with staff and students and of effective and proactive communications with students and staff likely to be affected by proposed changes. It was noted that staff would require to understand their role within the institution in order to best contribute to its success and that an interdisciplinary approach to professional services, as well as teaching and research, would inculcate a spirit of community and of One Dundee. Management was requested to undertake an analysis of other Universities who had effected similar transformational change and to further develop institutional thinking, including an assessment of the resource required to achieve its strategy and vision.

The Court welcomed the session and thanked Professor O'Neill, who commended the Deputy Director (Change Delivery), the Head of Strategic Intelligence and the Head of Financial Accounting for their work in preparing the presentation.

## 66. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, on behalf of the Court, welcomed Gregory Colgan to his first meeting as the member nominated by Dundee City Council. The Chair also welcomed Nyasha Mutembwa and Adam Robertson, in attendance to observe their first meeting as DUSA President Elect and Independent Member Elect respectively. Apologies were noted as having been received from Andrew Lothian.

## 67. MINUTES

**The Court decided:** to approve the minutes of the meeting on 26 April 2022 subject to one minor amendment.

One member noted that the minutes of recent meetings had yet to be published on the University web pages and was advised that this would be completed as soon as possible.

## 68. MATTERS ARISING

### (1) Action Log

The Court received the action log of Court business and noted that all actions were complete.

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

## 69. CHAIR'S REPORT TO COURT

The Court received the above report from the Chair outlining activities he had undertaken on behalf of the Court and the University since its last meeting. Members were advised that these had largely been related to supporting the Principal on the work to embed the Strategy into the culture of the University and to ensure that the institution had the capacity and capability to deliver its aims and ambitions. In addition, he had been working in tandem with the incoming Chair of Court to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

The Chair noted that he had invited the Committee Conveners to reflect upon the activities and achievements of their committees over the previous year in their reports to Court, which would be considered as **Paper G**. In a similar vein, the Chair had used his report to reflect upon his time in the role. Mr Bowie noted that the University had experienced some difficulties in recent years but commended the resilience of the Court and the Executive.

Whilst much had been achieved during his years on the Court, the Chair noted that challenges remained with yet more ambitions to realise. Members were encouraged to continue to offer constructive challenge to management, whilst the University Executive Group was urged to make full use of the expertise of Court members.

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

## 70. UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP REPORT TO COURT

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor introduced the University Executive Group (UEG) report which provided an update on emerging sectoral issues, internal operational and strategic matters,

and recent events. Members were advised that events had been held to launch the University Strategy where the Principal, alongside colleagues, had presented the Strategy followed by an open Q&A session at each of the three campuses. As part of the launch, a comprehensive communications roadmap had been developed which aimed to target all staff groups and to monitor engagement. Work was also underway to operationalise the sub-strategy implementation plans, and the first appointment to the Directorate of Strategic Change & Delivery had been made. The two remaining senior positions were being actively recruited and would be critical to the delivery of the Strategy.

The Court noted that, after a competitive external recruitment process, Professor Jeff Blackford (currently of the University of Liverpool) had been appointed as Dean of the School of Humanities, Social Sciences & Law, which would be formally established on 1 August 2022. The Principal commended the two interim Deans for their leadership throughout the period of transition. Members were advised that collective consultation regarding the formal change process was ongoing with the campus unions and that a focused voluntary severance scheme had opened on 8 June with outcomes anticipated by mid-August.

The Senior Vice-Principal was noted as working with the Deans of the School of Science & Engineering and the School of Business, with engagement from other members of UEG and the two School Executives, to develop their comprehensive strategic plans, specifying the distinctive ways in which they will deliver on the University Strategy. Both were developing clear timeframes and terms of reference for the external reviews that would take place in the next academic year following the submission of their School 5-Year Strategic Plans in the reformed planning process. Elsewhere, the Medical School Resource Unit (MSRU) remained largely on track to meet the Home Office deadline of 31 December 2022 to relocate the animal research facility from Ninewells to the City Campus.

The Principal intimated his belief that the University was on-track to meet its recruitment targets for Academic Session 2022/2023, although there continued to be risks around managing the volume of PGT applications, delays in visa processes and persisting travel restrictions in China which would impact the East Asia market. In partnership with the University's longstanding partner, Oxford International, the University had opened its office in Nigeria. Plans for working with universities in Nigeria were being developed and a delegation from the University of Lagos, led by their Vice-Chancellor had been received earlier in the month.

Members were apprised of matters relating to pensions, including a forthcoming assessment of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) funding position, which would be shared with employers in early July. Management was consulting with DUCU on a joint statement on the Union's 'four fights, with a view to avoiding further strike action, and the consultation regarding the UoDSS benefits change was due to conclude on 24 June 2022. Unite had notified management that they had received a mandate for industrial action and Unison would be carrying out a further ballot during the summer months. Management continued to indicate its willingness to hold discussions with the campus unions.

The Scottish Government had published its resource spending review to 2026/2027 earlier in June and the indicative allocation for HE appeared to be flat in cash terms, estimated to represent a real-terms cut of 8% over the five-year period. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) results had been received and the Court would receive a more detailed analysis of the implications of this for the University under **Paper F**.

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor expressed his delight that Graduation ceremonies could be held in-person and on-campus once more and congratulated all those who would be participating in the coming weeks. Members were advised that the first cohort of the joint Scottish Graduate Entry Medicine (ScotGEM) MBChB with the University of St Andrews had graduated the previous week.

Finally, the Court noted that this would be the last meeting of the Court to be presided over by the current Chair of Court, Mr Ronnie Bowie. On behalf of the University, Professor Gillespie thanked Mr Bowie for his many contributions and achievements during his nine years of service and assured those present that management would continue to seek the constructive challenge from Court which had characterised Mr Bowie's six years as Chair.

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

## 71. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

The Court received presentations from the Vice-Principal (Research) and from the Principal & Vice-Chancellor, intended to accompany **Paper E** on the outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. Members were advised that the results, which had been published in May, had placed the University four places lower overall in the United Kingdom rankings than in 2014. Within Scotland, however, the University had risen from 6<sup>th</sup> place to 5<sup>th</sup> place.

Professors Rowan and Gillespie drew the Court's attention to significant areas of performance, most notably in Life Sciences and in Allied Health Professions. Units of Assessment (UoAs) where the institution had performed less well had been identified and would be addressed in order to identify lessons learned as well as opportunities for improvement. The requirement in REF 2021 to return all staff with significant responsibility for research had impacted on the overall profile of the sector, with significant expansion in researcher numbers submitted across the UK and in Scotland.

Members were reminded that the REF also drove the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Research Excellence Grant (REG) which provided Government funding to support Scotland's research capabilities and competitiveness. Following the release of the REF 2021 results, SFC had announced changes to the methodology for the REG allocation in 2022/2023. When combined with sectoral results, the University's REG income would fall in 2022/2023.

The Court noted that the University Strategy 2022-2027 had delineated a roadmap for achieving research excellence with impact, including growing research capability and scale with focused investments in talent. An annual Strategic Research Fund would be created and new leadership teams established, aligned to thematic priorities and creating new interdisciplinary research institutes. Management was already working closely with NHS Tayside and Dundee City Council on potential areas for interdisciplinary and partnership development. Achieving competitive levels of research intensity would be prioritised, with the number of research active staff set to increase by 2027.

Comment was invited on management's proposals as to how the University might best improve its performance in future exercises. In discussion, members welcomed the frank assessment of the University's results and commended management's assessment of the steps required to ameliorate its future performance but noted that investing in excellence would require resource. The future size and shape of the institution would also be a critical

factor in achieving success and would be discussed at future meetings of the governing body throughout the coming academic session.

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

## 72. BUDGET AND 5-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

The Interim Director of Finance introduced the above proposed budget for 2022/2023 and the associated financial plan to 2026/2027, which would form the basis of the Strategic Plan Forecast submission to the SFC. Mr Fotheringham reminded members that, in September 2019, Court had approved the financial strategy to guide the planning process to achieve financial sustainability targets by 2026/27 as a response to a sustained period of reporting financial deficits and low levels of operating cashflow generation. The scale of the challenge to achieve financial sustainability had been sizeable with a target to achieve a breakeven surplus by year 5 (2023/2024).

The intervening period had been dominated by the Covid pandemic and whilst this had been extremely challenging, the University had proven financially resilient. Tuition fee income was maintained in 2020/21 and had grown significantly in 2021/22 whilst cost savings had been achieved in all areas across both years. Cash resources had grown due to restrictions to capital spend, additional government support (in 2020/21) and most significantly the disposal of shares in Exscientia in April 2021. Progress had been made to identify additional improvement, with Academic Excellence and Sustainability (AES) initiatives part of core plans alongside other projects.

The Court was advised that the plan reflected the projected recovery from Covid with a continuation of the work achieved to date to deliver financial sustainability. The University remained reliant on further growth in international tuition fees and additional cost savings, although progress achieved to date had reduced the scale of the risk in both these areas. Significant capital investment would be required and had been included as per the capital plan approved at March Finance & Policy Committee. An estimate for additional external borrowing had also been provided for in order to support the funding of this plan. Other risks included inflation, wage settlement and potential supply chain issues for capital projects. The importance of the three principal capital projects was noted as a significant investment which would result in significant cost reduction in future.

In discussion, members noted the ongoing imperative to make savings and achieve efficiency gains without compromising the student experience and were advised that the Financial Plan included targeted investment in Student Services and in digital technology for students. Management was requested to be mindful of the needs of students beyond the physical environment including focussing efforts into student mental health.

The Interim Director of Finance advised the Court that management was confident that measures to contain staff costs were reasonable. The Senior Vice-Principal noted that work was ongoing with all Schools to eliminate unnecessary replication of effort and to realise administrative efficiencies, as well as a forthcoming review of the workload allocation model.

The Convener of the Finance & Policy Committee advised the Court that the Committee had approved the proposal to target an achievement of 7% EBITDA as a percentage of income, which would cover ongoing capital requirements and debt servicing. In the longer term, however, the Committee wanted to track investments and effectiveness and requested that

management focus on teaching efficiencies beyond 2025. The Vice-Principal (Education) noted that the focus on teaching efficiency was intended to build capacity in order to expand.

The Court noted that the proposed budget 2022/2023 and associated financial plan to 2026/2026 were both ambitious and challenging and that management would be expected to deliver on the aims of the University Strategy.

**The Court decided:** to approve the proposed budget for 2022/2023 and the financial plan to 2026/2027.

### 73. REPORT TO COURT FROM THE DUSA PRESIDENT

The Court received an oral report from the President of the Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA) which summarised current and emerging student issues.

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

### 74. CONVENER REPORTS

The Conveners introduced their reports, highlighting matters of interest. Approvals are formally noted against the relevant Committee Report (minute 82).

The Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee provided an overview of the meeting held on 17 May 2022 and commended the Director of Information Technology on efforts to reduce cyber-security risk and to tackle challenging behaviours, noting that the Committee had endorsed the recommendation to remove the use of personal devices to access corporate data and information. Members noted that the Committee had received and considered the 2021/2022 planning report from the External Auditor, EY.

The Committee had discussed two final reports on internal audit reviews of Financial Controls and of the Student Experience and had received and approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/2023 from KPMG. The new Risk Register had also been approved and members had considered the matter of leadership as a potential risk. The Committee had also discussed the management of risk contagion and commended the approach taken by the Risk and Business Continuity Manager.

In introducing the report from the Finance & Policy Committee on 24 April 2022, the Convener informed the Court that the Committee had considered the draft five-year financial plan and had discussed in detail the levels of cost inflation anticipated and had requested an update on pay cost inflation assumptions. In the wider context, the Committee had also requested that a paper be submitted to a future meeting on how high levels of inflation over the medium term might impact on the University. The Committee had also approved the recommendation to set an EBITDA target of 7% as a percentage of income.

The Court was advised that the Committee had received and considered a report from the University's borrowing consultants on possibilities and parameters for borrowing, noting the effect that the changing financial situation could potentially have on interest rates. A further report had also been discussed on the possible cost of the major projects included in the capital programme.

Looking forward to academic session 2022/2023, the Committee would continue to monitor delivery of the financial plan and would expect to receive more detailed plans for the three major campus projects. The Court was further advised that the Committee would continue to have oversight of plans to meet current and future student accommodation needs and would review the spin-out and other research commercialisation policies.

The Convener of the Governance & Nominations Committee apprised the Court that the Committee's discussions at its meeting on 22 March had focussed largely on preparations for the coming academic session and had been pleased to reach a point in the recruitment of new lay members to make recommendations to the Court, which would be considered under **Paper H**. The Committee had reached a view that a balance of face-to-face and hybrid meetings for Committees, at the Conveners' discretion should continue whilst also recognising the importance of personal relationships among Court members and between the Court and the Executive.

Reflecting on the work of the Committee in recent years, the Convener noted in particular the implementation of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 and noted that the University's governance arrangements had stood the University in good stead in recent years.

The Convener of the People & Organisational Development Committee advised the Court that the Committee had endeavoured to ensure that the Committee's primary focus was on strategic issues rather than day-to-day operational issues. This had coincided with the development of the new University Strategy and its express recognition of the strategic importance of people in achieving the University's wider goals. The priorities of the People and Talent sub-strategy would facilitate informed policy-making and better tracking of progress in future.

The pace of change over the previous year had meant that the Committee had considered a wide range of complex issues including working arrangements during the pandemic and proposed approaches to organisational change, as well as a proposed voluntary severance scheme and proposed pension changes. It was expected that the Committee would focus on the implementation of the People and Talent sub-strategy during the forthcoming academic session.

The Convener of the Remuneration Committee advised the Court that, whilst the Committee had oversight of Grade 10 employees and the Principal's remuneration, it was also tasked with ensuring that the work of the Committee was informed by the wider pay landscape. To that end, the Committee's annual training session had included a detailed review of the main benchmarking studies used as external reference points when considering pay for Grade 10 staff. In addition, the Committee was conscious of the need for the University to remain competitive in attracting and retaining talent and therefore maintained a watching brief on such issues as the treatment of pension opt-out and Death in Service benefit costs.

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

## 75. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COURT

The Court received and considered a report from the Deputy University Secretary on Governance matters related to the Membership of the Court, submitted as **Paper H**. As noted in the report, the following other appointments to Court had been made following elections/nominations:



Greg Colgan	Nominated by Dundee City Council Executive under Statute 9(1)(e), with immediate effect for a first term of four years in the first instance ending on 31 July 2026;
Susan Walker	Elected by the Staff Council under Statute 9(1)(g) for a period of four years in the first instance, beginning on 1 August 2022;
Nyasha Mutembwa	Elected as President of the Students' Association to serve for Academic Year 2022/23; and
Adam Robertson	Elected as Independent Student Member of Court to serve for Academic Year 2022/23.

**The Court decided:**

- (i) To formally approve the appointment of Garry Taylor and Carla Rossini to the Court as lay members under Statute 9(1)(k) for a period of four years in the first instance beginning 1 August 2022; and
- (ii) To formally approve the appointment of Irene Wilson as a lay member of the Audit & Risk Committee for a period of four years in the first instance beginning 1 August 2022.

**76. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF SENATE TO THE UNIVERSITY COURT**

The Court reviewed the report from the Chair of Senate to the University Court and noted that Senate had received a presentation from the Vice-Principal (Research) on the results of the REF 2021 and their implications for funding. Senate had also received a presentation of plans for the launch of the new University Strategy to staff.

Senate had considered the implementation of Effectiveness Review Recommendations and had approved the recommendations regarding changes to Senate Membership from the Schools in academic session 2022/2023. Finally, the Senate had expressed its appreciation and thanks to the outgoing Chair of Court, Mr Ronnie Bowie.

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

**77. NARRATIVE FOR THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS**

The Chair of Court agreed to highlight to the Senate the presentations it had received from the Senior Vice-Principal and the Vice-Principal (Research). Senate would be advised of the Court's engagement with the implications of the REF results and its recommendation of early action. Other items to be brought to the attention of Senate included the DUSA annual report and the Court's commendation of the work undertaken by the Sports Union.

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

**78. REPORT FROM MEETING OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS**

The Court received a report from the meeting of the Senatus Academicus on 25 May 2022 and noted the areas highlighted to the Court.

- The Court decided:**
- (i) to note the approval of Senate for its part to endorse the amendments to Ordinance 18 as previously approved by Court;
  - (iii) to note Senate's appreciation and thanks to the outgoing Chair of Court;
  - (iv) to note Senate's discussions in relation to the REF results and funding implications;
  - (v) to note Senate's discussions in relation to the launch of the University Strategy 2022-2027;
  - (vi) to note Senate's discussions on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Effectiveness Review; and
  - (vi) otherwise, to note the report

**79. DUSA ANNUAL REPORT**

The Court received the above annual report from the President of the Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA), which highlighted progress made in relation to the 2021/2022 manifesto and provided an overview of the activities and achievements of the DUSA Executive and its members. The Chair and the Principal & Vice-Chancellor thanked Mr Vidakis for his friendship and support during his time as President and commended the work of the DUSA Executive.

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

**80. SPORTS UNION ANNUAL REPORT**

The Court received a report from the Sports Union President on the activities and achievements of the Sports Union and its members over the last 12 months. The Court commended the achievements of the Sports Union and noted that the Chair would write to the Sports Union Executive to congratulate them on their success.

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

**81. SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL: OUTCOME AGREEMENTS 2021/2022**

The Court was advised that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) had contacted the University in May 2022 to request additional information ahead of the publication of the 2021/2022 Outcome Agreements. A new table of 2020/2021 was provided showing the year's current position and the targets for 2021/2022, which remained unchanged. The data were submitted to SFC following sign-off by the Principal and Chair of Court.

**The Court decided:** to note that the data were supplied to SFC in a timely manner.

## 82. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### (1) Audit & Risk Committee Report

#### (i) Minute of the meeting on 17 May 2022

The Court received the minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 17 May 2022. The Court's discussion of matters raised by the Committee are detailed in the Conveners' Report (Minute 74).

**The Court decided:** (i) to note the Committee's discussions

supporting a proposed approach to anti-virus software updates;

(ii) to note the Committee's consideration of the External Audit Planning Report 2020/2021;

(iii) to note the Committee's consideration of a report on an internal audit review of Core Financial Controls;

(iv) to note the Committee's discussions in relation to a report on an internal audit review of the Student Experience;

(v) to note the Committee's approval of the draft Internal Audit Plan 2022/2023;

(vi) to note the Committee's approval of the new Risk Register;

(vii) to note the Committee's consideration of a report on risk contagion; and

(viii) otherwise, to approve the minutes.

#### (ii) **Reserved Business:** Reserved minute from the meeting on 17 May 2022

The Court received the reserved minute of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 May 2022

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

(2) Finance & Policy Committee

The Court received the minutes from the Meeting of the Committee of 24 April 2022. The Court's discussion of matters raised by the Committee is detailed in the Conveners' Report (Minute 74).

- The Court decided:**
- (i) to approve the Committee's recommendation of the Budget 2022/2023 and associated Financial Plan to 2026/2027;
  - (ii) to note the Committee's approval of a proposal to set a performance target of 7% EBITDA as a percentage of income;
  - (iii) to note the Committee's consideration of a report on options available for borrowing and the feasibility of different borrowing options;
  - (iv) to note the Committee's discussions in relation to a report on Capital Expenditure Projects; and
  - (v) otherwise, to approve the minutes.

(3) Governance & Nominations Committee

The Court received the minutes of the Committee's meeting on 24 April 2022. The Court's discussion of matters raised by the Committee is detailed in the Conveners' Report (Minute 74).

- The Court decided:**
- (i) to approve the recommendations of the Committee in relation to the membership of Court and its Committees as noted in Minute 75 ;
  - (ii) to approve the recommendation of the Committee to extend the appointment of Richard Bint to the Court for one further year under Statute 9(2)(h);
  - (iii) to note that the Committee had delegated to the Lay Members Recruitment Panel the authority to make recommendations in relation to the membership of Court and its Committees;
  - (iv) to note the Committee's discussion regarding the format of future meetings of Court and its Committees;
  - (v) to note the Committee's decision that a review of the Chair of Court's Effectiveness would not be appropriate; and

(vi) otherwise, to approve the minutes;

(4) People & Organisational Development Committee

The Court received the minutes of the Committee's meeting on 18 May 2022. The Court's discussion of matters raised by the Committee is detailed in the Conveners' Report (Minute 74).

**The Court decided:**

- (i) to note the Committee's consideration of people-related strategic matters and, in particular, updates on the implementation of the People and Talent sub-Strategy;
- (ii) to note that the Committee had received a report on progress towards the University's renewal application for the Athena Swan Bronze Award;
- (iii) to note that the University Executive Group would make a decision on the University's future approach to hybrid working in June 2022; and
- (iii) otherwise, to approve the minutes.

(5) Staff Council Minutes

The Court reviewed the minutes from the meeting on 23 May 2022.

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

### 83. SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS

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

Name	Title
Professor Linda Martindale	Dean of School of Health Sciences
Professor Jeff Blackford	Dean of School of Humanities, Social Sciences & Law

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

### 84. THANKS AND DEPARTURES

The Chair of Court gave thanks on behalf of the Court and of the University to members who would leave the membership of the Court at the end of the academic year as follows: Megan-Rose Birdsall, Rebecca Leiper and Dimitris Vidakis. In doing so he highlighted the unique contributions made by each member to the Court, the University, and to his own personal understanding of the issues at hand.

**The Court decided:** to thank the members leaving the Court and wish them well in their future endeavours.

**85. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor noted that this would be the last meeting of the Court presided over by the outgoing Chair of Court. On behalf of the Court and of the University, Professor Gillespie thanked Mr Bowie for his nine years of dedicated service on the Court, the last six of which as Chair.

**The Court decided:** to thank the outgoing Chair of Court for his dedicated service to the University.

Mr Ronald Bowie  
Chair of Court  
University of Dundee

## Appendix 1

### UEG REPORT TO COURT

#### A. INTRODUCTION

1. At the September 2021 retreat we embarked on the journey towards reshaping our institution in the pursuit of a more confident and sustainable future. We have made substantial progress but must continue with these critical changes if we are to place our university on a stronger footing. The recent REF 2021 results have further evidenced the importance of doing so, and support our analysis and assumptions shared back in 2021.
2. With this said, in considering the matters within this report, we remain aware of the changing, and somewhat challenging contextual environment we find ourselves in. The world around us is changing at pace, from an exceptional inflationary environment, pressures from research funding consequences of Brexit, restricted funding awards from the Scottish Funding Council and a challenging and competitive international market – all set against a backdrop of industrial action on a number of fronts.
3. The changes we have committed to will be key to the delivery of our new University Strategy. However, we must take a holistic and realistic view of how we get there, given the challenges we face. It is evident that we need to review the schedule and prioritisation of our delivery plans so that we can achieve our ambitions at a steady, measured and sustainable pace. The pre-Court briefing will focus on our journey thus far and we look forward to engaging with Court on our future direction of travel.

#### B. STRATEGIC MATTERS

##### University Strategy

4. In the week prior to this meeting of Court, we will have launched our University Strategy to the staff community. At these events, held at our three campuses the Principal, alongside various colleagues, will present the strategy, followed by an open Q&A session. The launch aims to help staff understand and identify with our strategy's key messages, promote themes of partnership, empowerment and accountability and ultimately build a sense of pride and confidence within our community. Alongside our launch events, we have developed a comprehensive communications roadmap that aims to target all staff groups and monitor engagement with our strategy going forward.
5. Work is underway to operationalise the University's sub-strategy implementation plans. The appointment of the Deputy Director (Change Delivery), Julie Christie, to the Directorate of Strategic Change & Delivery has been an important first step in mobilising delivery. The two remaining appointments of Director of Strategic Change & Delivery and Deputy Director (Strategic Planning) are being actively recruited with an executive search firm. These will be critical to the delivery of our strategy and our adaptation and responsiveness to the environment we are currently operating in.

##### UEG Priorities

6. A brief update on progress towards our strategic priorities can be found below.

*Academic Excellence & Sustainability*

7. The School of Humanities, Social Sciences & Law will be formally established on 1 August 2022. After a competitive external recruitment process, Professor Jeff Blackford (currently at the University of Liverpool) has been appointed as Dean, and Jeff will take up his role on 22 August 2022. He comes with a wealth of experience across several areas including academic recruitment, employability, partnerships, applied research, professional training, and postgraduate education, and we are confident he will lead the delivery of our ambitions for this newly established School. Our thanks, of course, go to the Director of the New Combined School and the other two interim Deans for their hard work and leadership throughout this transformational period. Collective consultation regarding the formal change process is on-going with the campus unions, and a focused voluntary severance scheme opened on 8 June for specific groups of staff, with outcomes anticipated by mid-August.
8. The Medical School Resource Unit (MSRU) project (moving our animal research facility at Ninewells to the City Campus), despite challenges, remains largely on track to meet the Home Office deadline of the 31 December 2022.
9. The Senior Vice-Principal is working with the Deans of the School of Science & Engineering and the School of Business, with engagement from other members of UEG and the two School Executives, to develop their comprehensive strategic plans, specifying the distinctive ways in which they will deliver on the University Strategy. Both are developing clear timeframes and terms of reference for the external reviews that will take place next academic year following the submission of their School 5-Year Strategic Plans in the reformed planning process.

*Growing Recruitment (International Focus)*

10. We believe we are on track to meet budget in 2022/23 (a fuller update on student recruitment activities can be found in appendix 1). With this said there continue to be risks around:
  - Managing the volume of PGT application increases;
  - No substantial increase in UG demand from well qualified non-EU international applicants;
  - Potential for delayed visa processes in large and higher risk Africa and South Asia markets; and
  - Persisting travel restrictions in China that will impact the East Asia market

We are of course monitoring such risks carefully and taking mitigating actions in each area.

11. As first steps in the delivery of our new focus on Africa we have opened our office in Nigeria, in partnership with our longstanding International College Dundee partner, Oxford International. We have also appointed a head of Africa projects who will commence in role in September and have developed plans to work with the University of Nigeria to launch a dual degree in law, explore exchange projects in architecture and provide support for capacity building in country.
12. Earlier this month we hosted a Vice Chancellor-led delegation from the University of Lagos (UniLag). UniLag is the second highest ranked University in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation. In early August, the Principal will lead a delegation to Malawi building on existing links and exploring how we can deepen research collaborations on climate related matters, as well as better position ourselves in the run up to COP27.



13. The ongoing pandemic management arrangements in China also remain a challenge for our joint programmes and joint institute and we continue to explore arrangements to allow us to continue to teach remotely if required.

### *Digital*

14. The delivery of 'digitally enhanced campus' is progressing well, and our current focus is the implementation of a new operating model that will underpin the rapid, agile delivery of enhanced capabilities to the University. We are working towards a new operating model incorporating elements of CTIL, IT and BT into a cohesive Digital & Technology Services Directorate. The new operating model will complete the key steps identified in the Digital Strategy to create dedicated teams to support research and learning and teaching. In addition, to ameliorate recruitment challenges, in conjunction with HR we have launched a graduate development programme that aims to develop raw talent and leverage the graduate output from the University in terms of technology and design.

## **C. INTERNAL MATTERS**

### **Budget**

15. Members will find elsewhere on the agenda a paper (paper F) detailing the proposed budget over the course of the next five-years. The plan reflects the projected recovery from Covid with a continuation of the work achieved to date to deliver financial sustainability. The plan aims to deliver a breakeven in year 1 – our first budgeted year 1 operating surplus in 10 years. This is an important milestone on our journey towards financial sustainability and is a year ahead of the 2019 Court target. This is despite ongoing inflationary pressures to wage costs, energy and utilities and other consumable prices, which we have been able to largely offset due to an improved outlook for international tuition fees and strong cost control.
16. As we roll out the new University strategy, the plan reflects a more confident outlook. Significant capital investment is included as per the capital plan approved at March Finance & Policy Committee and an estimate for additional external borrowing is now provided for in order to support the funding of this plan. Whilst we remain reliant on further growth in international tuition fees and additional cost savings, progress achieved to date reduces the scale of the risk in both these areas.

### **Pension Matters**

17. The latest (March 2022) USS monitoring provided a more encouraging update on the scheme's health following the reforms enacted earlier in the year. It should be noted that the monitoring is to keep an eye on the overall direction and is not intended to replicate the outcome from a full valuation. UUK have asked the USS Trustee to conduct a more detailed assessment into the scheme's funding position as at 31 March 2022. This is due to be considered by the USS Trustee Board in late June and shared with employers and the JNC in early July.
18. Alongside action short of a strike, DUCU has announced three further days of strike action at Dundee on 20, 21 and 22 June. A number of institutions across the UK have agreed joint statements with their UCU branches on pensions and the union's 'four fights', which have led to the withdrawal of strike action locally. At the time of writing management is consulting with DUCU on such a statement at Dundee and is hopeful agreement can be reached.
19. The consultation regarding UoDSS benefit change is ongoing and concludes on 24 June 2022. Four, one hour-long open meetings for affected staff were held in the Dalhousie Building in the week of 6

June supplementing the ten sessions offered across the weeks of 5 April and 4 May 2022. These were led by the University Secretary and the Director and Deputy Director of HR, along with expert input from our advisers, Mercers. The sessions comprised presentations on the proposals followed by open discussion to answer questions and obtain staff feedback.

20. Unite have recently balloted their members linked to the consultation and we have been notified that they received a mandate for industrial action, with Unison indicating that they have also been mandated by their members to carry out a further ballot during the summer months with a view to taking action at the start of the new term. Management has indicated its willingness to hold discussions with the campus unions both before and after the consultation closes and before proposals come to Court in late August.

### Research Excellence Framework 2021

21. On 11 May 2022, the results for our 2021 REF submission were announced – the main assessment of research across the higher education sector in the UK. We will consider this at some length during our meeting. In headlines terms:

- We received a mixed report card with some very considerable strengths mitigated by a number of evident weaknesses, very much confirming our predictions at the Court Retreat in September 2021
- We were named top University in the UK for Biological Sciences
- We recorded a strong performance in our clinical-related research, in the areas of Clinical Medicine and Allied Health Professions
- Our School of Art & Design was confirmed as the highest graded art school in Scotland
- Our disciplinary clusters of Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science and Informatics, and Engineering are all in the top 30 in the UK
- Our School of Business saw some improvement over the 2014 REF, and;
- With the notable exception of Geography, most of our Social Sciences and Humanities disciplines performed relatively poorly

22. The overall financial impact of these results is negative. We have an extensive item on the agenda covering analysis of our results (paper E), implications for us as a University, and a presentation on the broader look at the research funding environment to explore how we put ourselves in the best position going forward.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

23. We continue our work to deliver against our refreshed approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, and as part of this new framework, are developing a programme of equality, diversity and inclusion training for Court members and senior management. At the most recent UEG Away Day on 27 May, the Executive Group engaged fully in a bespoke half-day race equality training programme. This was an incredibly insightful, externally facilitated session focused on the key characteristics of an anti-racist university. Learnings helped us to deepen our understanding of issues relating to race in higher education and identify actions we can take as senior leaders to address issues of race at our own institution. We look forward to engaging Court in the near future when our training map has been further developed.

### Stakeholder Engagements

24. Earlier last month, the Principal welcomed Adrian Gillespie, CEO of Scottish Enterprise, to the Drug Discovery Unit in the School of Life Sciences to share our achievements and aspirations in the

enterprise and innovation space. It was subsequently encouraging to hear him, in his keynote speech at the BioDundee conference, express strong support for the Life Sciences Innovation District we are establishing in the city in collaboration with the City Council and partners.

25. At the recent Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) showcase, the Principal led discussions around policy issues regarding the AHRC and UKRI, the need to address complex funding issues, and demonstrated the University's strength in innovation for the city and region. The outcomes of these discussions will build a strong foundation for us to explore with partners how we can best contribute to regional development and stimulate further opportunities.

### Appointments

26. Alongside the appointment of a new Dean to the School of Humanities, Social Sciences & Law, we have also appointed a permanent Dean for Health Sciences, Professor Linda Martindale, who has been acting as Interim Dean since September 2021.
27. In late May, we welcomed back our Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, Pamela Milne. We would like to thank Patricia Matheson for her leadership and guidance as interim Director.

### Awards and Accolades

28. A full list of awards and accolades can be found in appendix 3. Professor Kate Storey, Head of the Division of Cell & Developmental Biology and Chair of Neural Development in the School of Life Sciences, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS). This is a demonstration of our triple intensity and in our mission to transform lives through our research.

### Graduation Ceremonies

29. Our summer Graduation ceremonies will take place at the Caird Hall in Dundee for our 2022 graduands as well as welcoming back our graduates who missed out on graduating in Summer and Winter 2020 and Summer 2021. Over this period, we will witness over 5,000 graduands and graduates cross the stage. For the first time since 2019 we have the pleasure of hosting this major event in person, and we hope that this marks a new chapter in the post-pandemic era and in our return to vibrant University life. We hope that many of you will be able to join us in celebrating our students, who have shown tremendous determination and achieved remarkable things in spite of the disruption and challenges faced during the pandemic period.

## D. EXTERNAL MATTERS

### Queens Speech

30. During the Queen's Speech on the 10 May 2022, the UK government's legislative agenda was noted to include reforms to higher education and measures aimed at levelling up and driving local growth. The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill, which did not complete its passage through Parliament in the 2021-22 session, has been brought back to continue on its legislative path. Whilst the Bill only affects institutions south of the border, this is a complex issue and we will maintain a watching brief of any developments that may influence policy in Scotland. Furthermore, the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill proposes a local levy on industry to support developments, with the examples of schools, GP surgeries, and roads given. It is not yet clear how liability for this levy will be established – or whether local further or higher education provision could be one of the beneficiaries.

## Horizon Europe

31. Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion. The UK's associate membership of Horizon Europe was proposed as part of the December 2020 post-Brexit trade deal. The delay in finalising our membership has been costly and it is becoming increasingly likely the UK Government will shortly announce a decision to forgo membership. The Principal, as member of the Horizon Europe Plan B Committee, will provide the University with a voice in this complex issue. We will maintain a watching brief on any developments and ensure we are prepared for any outcomes.

## Scottish Government Budget Allocations

32. The Scottish Government published its resource spending review on 1st June, setting out its high-level spending intentions to 2026/27. The indicative allocation for higher education (specifically allocated to the Scottish Funding Council) is set to be flat in cash terms for the next four years at £1,501 million. Whilst this is not entirely unexpected and mirrors our budget assumption in terms of flat cash settlement across the 5 years, it is estimated to represent a real terms cut of at least 8% over the period. Naturally this is disappointing news, and we will continue to lobby for an improved allocation of resource both directly to government and indirectly through Universities Scotland and other sector bodies.

## 2022 Local Election

33. Political leadership remains stable in Dundee following the local election on 5 May. John Alexander remains leader of Dundee City Council, which now constitutes an SNP majority council. We are also delighted to welcome Greg Colgan to Court as the member nominated by Dundee City Council under the revised Statute 9. The university has an extremely strong relationship with both Greg and John, and continuity of the city's leadership team creates stability and opportunity for us.

## E. CLOSING

34. As members will know, this will be the last meeting of Court presided over by the current Chair of Court Ronnie Bowie. We would like to thank Ronnie for his contributions to this University over his 9 years of service as a member of Court, the last six of which have been as Chair. Ronnie has led the Court through some exceptional times — during his tenure he has seen the launch of two University strategies, seen us launch our stand-alone School of Business and international recruitment, pushed the frontiers in terms of lobbying and engagement and has taken us from a financially unsustainable institution to one that has built firm foundations for a bright future. Ronnie has managed the transition of numerous Vice-Principals, a Senior Vice-Principal and four Principals and has remained a stabilizing voice throughout challenging and uncertain times.
35. Under Ronnie's guidance, the Court has developed confidence in the plans we have to reshape our institution into one that is markedly excellent, capable and sustainable. Ronnie has been a truly exceptional Chair and the UEG would like to formally record its gratitude to him for his challenge and support ahead of more informal thanks to come. Ronnie will always be welcome here, and we hope he will continue to support and advocate on behalf of the University even once the mantle of Chair has been passed. We are sure that our soon to be Chair of Court, Amanda Millar, will join the UEG in wishing Ronnie well for the future.

### Principal's Closing Remarks

36. Reflecting on what was collectively agreed at the September 2021 Court Retreat, it is evident that the results of our recent REF2021 submission have shown that we are indeed on the right path. Having launched the University Strategy on 15 June, we must take our community along with us on this journey to deliver, together, on the ambitions set out in our strategy. It is critical now that we maintain our momentum, drive and sense of focus through into the new academic year, with our new Chair of Court, Amanda Millar, officially taking over the baton in our journey towards transformation.

**Student Recruitment Update**

1. The table below notes **confidence in meeting 2022/23 budget targets**. This confidence level has not changed since the April 2022 update.

2022/23 Intake Budget with confidence			Scottish	RUK	Overseas
RAG Rating			(budget)	(budget)	(budget)
Open	UG	Controlled			
		Uncontrolled (S1+S2)			
	PGT	Semester 1			
		Semester 2			
	PGR	Semester 1			
		Semester 2			
Partnerships			not/applicable		
ICD			not /applicable		

Key	
Do not expect to meet budget	
Uncertain	
Expect to meet budget	

2. We expect to meet UG Scot and RUK targets.
3. International applications have grown at significant pace, with International PGT applications up more than 95% on the same point last year, largely driven by continued significant increases in demand from Africa and South Asia. UG International applications have grown but the pool of well qualified non-EU international applicants does not appear to have grown at the same pace. We have taken mitigating action to increase capacity to make offers to this much larger application volume but given the continued growth in applications we are now making additional mitigations. We have now made 40% more offers to International PGT applicants than at the same point last year. We are not meeting our target application to decision turnaround, although evidence from the sector suggests this is the case across most competitor universities. The current strong application position and improving offer and acceptance position suggest we have cause for optimism that the Semester 1 2022/23 international targets will be met, but we continue to mitigate against risks associated with likely delays in UK Home Office visa issuance and challenges in market relating to visa policy.
4. In the previous update it was noted that significant increases in visa risk had emerged in S1 2021/22, with a changed applicant pool profile. This issue persists as our application volumes grow. We have mitigated some of these risks while remaining competitive as noted: checking applicant financial statements and reviews of entry requirements, English language ability, use of agents and direct (non-agent) and marketing in higher-risk markets. Mitigating steps have now also been taken around CAS issuance (the document which supports their UK visa application) for international applicants, with development of additional in-market CAS verification in key target markets in Africa and efforts underway to introduce similar in-market verification in India.

## Appendix 1, Annex 2

## 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.
2. Members can find a full list of research grants and awards since the last reporting period in the [‘Supplementary Information’ folder](#)

- A. Research Award Highlights  
**Professor D W Gray (Life Sciences)**  
**MRC IAA 2021 University of Dundee**  
**£1,614,600 from the Medical Research Council**

The University of Dundee has been successful in the latest round of Impact Accelerator Awards run by UKRI. The 3-year funding of over £1.6 million will continue the successful translational efforts of previous Confidence in Concept awards run through the Drug Discovery Unit’s Innovative Targets Group. This team has delivered multiple partnerships with industry, licensing deals and delivered data packages that has enabled the formation of biotech companies with significant financial returns to the University - >£5million so far with the potential for >£60 million’.

- (i) **Dr A Keitel (social Sciences)**  
**The Influence of Individual Differences in Brain Rhythms on Speech Perception and Age-Related Hearing Loss (with University of Muenster and University of Glasgow)**  
**£621,569 (including £292,160 overheads) from the Medical Research Council**

In this 3-year project, my team and I will map brain rhythms that are involved in speech comprehension in a large population with varying hearing levels. The main aim is to find neural processes that can compensate for hearing loss. In a second stage, we will then establish whether non-invasively enhancing these brain rhythms leads to improved speech comprehension.

- (iii) **Dr M Swamy (Life Sciences)**  
**Metabolic Regulation of Intraepithelial T Lymphocyte Responses to Intestinal Infection (Fellowship ext.)**  
**£559,842 from the Wellcome Trust**

In response to intestinal infection, immune cells mobilise their arsenal to protect the gut. This response involves energy-consuming processes such as secretion of effector molecules and increased immune surveillance. In this project we will investigate how intestinal immune cells get their energy to survive and fuel immune responses in this nutritionally unique environment. These studies will tell us how immunometabolic responses are tailored to the gut environment and will inform future studies of how diet regulates intestinal immune responses.

- (iv) **Professor A Dinkova-Kostova (Medicine)**  
**The Role of Nrf2 in the Tumour Microenvironment of IDH Wild-Type Glioma (Joint with University of Edinburgh)**  
**£401,527 (including £186,582 overheads) from the Medical Research Council**

In this project, we aim to test the hypothesis that activation of a transcription factor that is critical for the resolution of inflammation in tumour-associated immune cells promotes the development of glioma, a devastating brain cancer type. This knowledge may open possibilities to suppress the pro-tumoural activity of these cells, and design more effective treatments.

- (v) **Dr A Aranceta-Garza (Life Sciences)**  
**Development of High-Density Surface-Electromyographic Biomarkers to Improve Stroke Rehabilitation, Management and Prognosis (Joint with University of Maribor, Slovenia, National Institute of Rehabilitation, Mexico and NHS Tayside)**  
**£362,084 (including £176,404 overheads) from Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council**

Stroke is a leading cause of disability and mortality all over the world: for example, someone in the UK has a stroke every 3.5 seconds. The proposed research aims to be the first to utilise specific patterns of activity from patients' muscles following stroke, to accurately evaluate motor impairment and use this to guide and optimise therapeutic input. This project will be a step-change compared to current stroke management and will develop new and accurate patient-centred approaches that will address this potential multi-billion pound healthcare crisis and radically improve patients' quality of life following stroke

- (vi) **Dr P E Whatley (Humanities)**  
**Diabetes in Scotland Since the 1920s**  
**£76,428 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council**

History and Archive and Information Studies has been successful in securing an Arts and Humanities Research Council doctoral award to support study on 'Diabetes in Scotland Since the 1920: Patient-Consumerism and the 'Doctor-Patient' relationship, following transformations in Scottish Health Services and the discovery of insulin'. The award, supervised by History and Medicine, will build on existing expertise in the disciplines and will seek to establish how transformations in technology, treatment, and health services, influenced Scotland's diabetic experience. This is a timeous award, close to the 100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin in 1921.



**Appendix 1, Annex 3****People and Prizes**

1. 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.

Royal Society (FRS)

2. Professor Kate Storey, Head of the Division of Cell & Developmental Biology and Chair of Neural Development in the School of Life Sciences, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS), the world's oldest scientific academy in continuous existence. Research in Professor Storey's laboratory focusses on early development of the nervous system and her work has uncovered a fundamental signalling mechanism that regulates neural differentiation in vertebrate embryos. Professor Storey is also a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and in 2019 was awarded the Waddington Medal, the only national award in Developmental Biology and which honours outstanding research performance as well as services to the scientific community.

Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences

3. Mary Renfrew, Professor Emerita at the University of Dundee's School of Health Sciences, is the first midwife to have been elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences. She has been nominated for her ground-breaking research into infant health and maternity care, work that has subsequently helped to shape modern day care for mothers and newborns in the UK and internationally.

Queen's Birthday Honours

4. Three University of Dundee academics have been recognised in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours list. Mary Renfrew, Professor Emerita at the University of Dundee's School of Health Sciences, has been named an OBE for her services to midwifery, while Dr Elaine McNaughton, MBChB Integrated Teacher in the School of Medicine, has been made an MBE for services to General Practice and GP Training in Scotland. Meanwhile, Jean Ker, Professor Emerita at the School of Medicine, has received an OBE for services to Medical Education.

**Appendix 1, Annex 4****University Executive Group Meetings**

1. The University Executive Group has met formally on 20 April, 4 May, 18 May and 1 June.

**A. HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Training Map, Athena Swan
- Industrial Action
- Hybrid Working
- Pulse Survey
- Global Mobility
- Technicians Commitment

**B. FINANCE MATTERS**

- Pensions
- Management Accounts
- Budget and Financial Plan

**C. STRATEGIC MATTERS**

- University Strategy
- Organisational Change
- Risk Register
- UMG: Policy and Strategy

**D. ACADEMIC MATTERS**

- Research Excellence Framework 2021
- Skills Agenda
- Academic Appraisals Process
- QAS Annual Report
- Founders Report

**E. RECRUITMENT/INTERNATIONAL MATTERS**

- Africa Project
- Recruitment Updates

**Appendix 2****AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MINUTES**

A meeting of the Committee was held on 17 May 2022 via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Keith Winter (Convener);  
Tricia Bey;  
Andrew Lothian;  
Colin Clunie.

<u>In Attendance:</u> Peter Fotheringham Dr Neale Laker	Interim Director of Finance; Deputy University Secretary and Director of Academic & Corporate Governance;
Dr Jim McGeorge Dr Jonathan Monk Dr Liz Rogers Kenny Stewart James Lucas Stephen Reid	University Secretary; Director of UODIT (for item 2.2); Risk and Business Continuity Manager; Policy Officer (Corporate Governance); KPMG; EY.

Apologies: Richard Bint; and  
Professor Wendy Alexander.

**1. MINUTES**

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes of the meeting of 1 March 2022.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

The Convener advised members that this would be the last meeting attended by Colin Clunie, who would be standing down from the Committee. The Committee thanked him for his knowledge and input into the Committee's work over his tenure.

**(1) Action Log**

The Committee received and considered the above action log on progress made to date in relation to outstanding actions from previous meetings.

**Resolved:** to note the log.

**(2) Anti-malware deployment update (Minute 5 (i))**

The Committee received and considered a short paper from the Director of University of Dundee Information Technology (UoDIT), intended to provide members with an update on the status of anti-malware activity across University devices.

Members noted that UoDIT had carried out an audit of equipment to establish the exact quantum of devices that were not compliant. A number of devices with issues had been identified and UoDIT would act to reduce the vulnerabilities that these devices might cause.

Further action to widen access to the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure would also allow staff using personal devices to access systems securely. The Committee was advised that a proposal

to implement these changes had already been approved by the Data, Records, and Information Committee (DRIC) which had responsibility for information security within the University. This paper would be submitted to UEG for consideration and approval.

The Committee acknowledged that issues around the adoption of anti-malware software among staff were behavioural more than technical, and that the scale of required cultural change among University staff was considerable. Honorary and associate staff had infrequent interaction with University materials and their lack of regular engagement also posed challenges.

The Committee agreed that it should further discuss staff cultural and behavioural issues with PODCo.

- Resolved:**
- (i) to support the proposed approach to anti-virus software updates; and
  - (ii) the Convener to discuss with the Convener of PODCo next steps in tackling non-compliance.

(3) Approach to Academic Performance Review – University Executive Group (UEG) update

The Committee received an oral report from the University Secretary on the Academic Performance Review process. Members noted that progress had been made on the Academic Excellence and Sustainability (AES) Staff Workstream, and that, following approval by the UEG, it would launch a new process of academic staff review as an interim measure during the 2022/2023 academic year.

The Committee was advised that the revised appraisal documentation was linked more clearly to the new University strategy and set out a defined window for performance reviews to take place between April and July. The new academic staff appraisal process would be mandatory and would align with those other processes which contributed to staff appraisal overall, such as the Annual Research Review.

In discussion, members noted that the next steps would involve discussions with the campus unions prior to the planned roll out, which would also include training staff in the new process. In view of the heavy workload for academic staff between April and June, the Committee considered whether the review period should be changed to between May and July.

The Committee agreed that that the new process should be subject to a review after one year to ensure that the review had realised its objectives. The Committee agreed that this could be supported through an internal audit review, due to be completed by July 2023 and a report presented to the Committee's first meeting in the 2023/2024 academic year.

- Resolved:**
- (i) to note the update and planned implementation of the interim academic staff appraisal process following UEG's approval; and
  - (ii) to receive an update on the review process through internal audit reports as required.

### 3. CONVENER'S UPDATE

The Convener apprised members of his activities and interactions at a sectoral level of relevance to the Committee. Members were reminded of key items discussed at the April meeting of Court, including the changing dynamics and challenges in international recruitment for UK HE institutions, as well as the Court's consideration of the implementation plans and proposed key performance indicators intended to support the new University Strategy. Members were advised that future deep-dive sessions would be focussed on those areas of the strategic implementation plans of relevance to the Committee's future workplan.

Finally, the Committee noted the release of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 results. A full analysis of results and associated risks would be provided to the Committee at its meeting in October 2022.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

### 4. EXTERNAL AUDIT: AUDIT PLANNING REPORT

The Committee received and considered the External Audit Planning report 2021/2022 from EY for the period to 31 July 2022, intended to provide members with a basis to review the proposed audit approach and scope for the 2021/2022 audit, in accordance with the requirements of auditing standards. The report summarised the external auditor's assessment of the key issues in the development of an effective audit for the University and delineated the planned strategy in response to those risks.

Key areas likely to affect future corporate reporting and audit considerations included the outcomes of the UK Government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) consultation feedback report, Restoring Trust in Audit and Corporate Governance, which would be published shortly. Members agreed that outcomes from the BEIS consultation would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

Mr Reid also advised the Committee that developments in Climate Change and Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) reporting could potentially require universities to provide commentary on the climate change reporting mandated under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019.

Members were advised that the external audit process would transition back to its pre-Covid timetable, with accounts sign-off scheduled for November 2022. This would allow for December filing with the Scottish Funding Council. The Committee requested that the Finance Directorate and EY review the timeline to ensure preparation of statements for consideration at its October meeting, with an update at the August meeting and sought assurances that the stringent timeline would be met ahead of the November meeting of the Court.

**Resolved:**

- (i) to note the External Audit Planning Report 2021/22;
- (ii) to receive an update on the preparation of Financial Statements at the August meeting of the Committee; and
- (iii) to consider the audit and corporate governance implications from the BEIS consultation at a future meeting.

## 5. INTERNAL AUDIT

### **(1) Core Financial Controls: General Ledger and Capital Planning**

The Committee received and considered the above report on the internal audit review of Core Financial Controls (CFC), comprising three parts: General Ledger, Capital Planning and Floor Accounts. The report had reached an assessment of partial assurance with improvements required (Amber-Red) for General Ledger and an assessment of significant assurance with minor improvement opportunities (Amber-Green) for both Capital Planning and Floor Accounts. The report had made one high priority and four moderate priority recommendations and had concluded that action was required to tighten procedures for staff to limit the self-approval of journals with further work required to ensure all transactions within the general ledger had followed an appropriate approval process, and that ledger backup was robust and tested. A number of areas of good practice had also been identified.

In particular the Committee noted that the degree of self-approval of journals required urgent review to ensure appropriate controls were in place to prevent fraudulent entries. The audit had uncovered a number of people able to self-approve, and whilst the head of financial accounting had reviewed self-approvals and found no inappropriate activity, this was clearly a risk.

The Committee was advised that the Floor Accounts system (essentially a system of special suspense accounts used for research expenditure) was unique to the University and, whilst the control framework had been effectively structured, the audit had concluded that it would benefit from a review to ensure that operating practice during the global pandemic had been correctly accounted for. Such a review would also be expected to consider whether staff had been appropriately trained on the process.

The Committee noted that report sign off had occurred shortly after its March meeting and, as a consequence, some audit timescales and target dates had already passed. The Interim Director of Finance indicated that action had already been taken to resolve these issues, noting that KPMG would formally report on completion of actions in due course as part of its routine follow-up reporting.

- Resolved:**
- (i) the Interim Director of Finance to provide an update to the Committee to provide assurance that discrepancies in staff role profiles had been removed; and
  - (ii) otherwise, to note the internal audit report on the review of Core Financial Controls.

### **(2) Student Experience**

The Committee received and considered the above report on the internal audit review of the Student Experience. The report had focused on an analysis of results from the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), and had reached an assessment of significant assurance with minor improvement opportunities (Amber-Green) with one medium-priority recommendation made.

Whilst the review had found that there was a sound process for capturing and reviewing output from both the NSS and the PRES, it had recommended a standardised process for capturing actions in a Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time (SMART) way be

implemented. The report had further identified a lack of a formally defined process for monitoring progress against survey action plans.

**Resolved:** To note the report of the internal audit review of the Student Experience.

### **(3) Internal Audit Progress Report**

The Committee received and considered the above Internal Audit Progress Report, which provided a summary of progress against the internal audit plan 2021/22 and an updated version of the management action tracker. The report was intended to provide the Committee with assurance that management actions previously agreed in internal audit reviews had been implemented satisfactorily. Of the seven reviews agreed for 2021/22, three had been completed. A further two were at draft report stage and fieldwork was in progress for the reviews of Data Quality: HESA Estates return; Project Management and Financial Budgeting (Q4).

The report outlined 33 actions outstanding, with one new high priority finding identified: the number of finance staff able to self-approve journals. Fourteen actions were not yet due and 18 were overdue, of which six were within the review of Human Resources and Payroll (HRP) implementation.

The Committee acknowledged the sheer volume of current HR activity: implementation of HRP and the delivery of implementation plans for the new University strategy and key strategic change projects. In a related discussion, members considered whether target dates provided for the delivery of audit objectives had been too ambitious and whether optimism bias led to a lack of objectivity in how target dates had been set. The Committee was assured that part of the role of internal auditors was to challenge management on the target dates provided in the finalised reports.

Members were apprised that the internal auditors intended to introduce additional methods of progress measurement in future reports, which would show the extent of progress made towards the achievement of objectives on a percentage basis. The Committee was advised that this measure was used in other reports prepared by the auditors and allowed a focus on priority areas which required action by accountable officers.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

## **6. INTERNAL AUDIT: AUDIT PLAN 2022/23**

The Committee received the proposed internal audit plan for 2022/2023 from KPMG which had been developed in consultation with members of UEG following consideration of the new University Strategy and its implementation plans, and with regard to strategic and operational risks. The draft plan proposed seven areas for internal audit mapped to the Institutional Risk Register (IRR).

The Committee considered the proposed timeline for the Severance Arrangements audit. It was noted that this would be delivered in two phases, the first to be carried out in Q4 2021/22 based on the planned organisational changes within the University and which would be considered at the Committee's meeting in August 2022. Phase Two of the audit would be undertaken in 2022/23 and would test the calculation and scheduling of severance payments.

The Committee considered whether the review of Cyber Security proposed for Q2 in 2023/2024 be brought forward in view of the continuing and evolving risk posed by potential cyber attacks and was advised that KPMG had conducted reviews of cyber security in each of the previous two years. These had resulted in a substantial number of recommendations for the University to implement and which would continue to be reported to the Committee as part of regular updates.

**Resolved:** to approve the audit plan as presented for 2022/23.

#### 7. **RESERVED BUSINESS: BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION UPDATE**

[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.]

#### 8. **INSTITUTIONAL RISK REGISTER**

The Committee reviewed the new institutional risk register (IRR) and accompanying summary paper explaining the approach taken to the development of the new IRR. The IRR had been revised to align risks and controls to the actions and outcomes in the University Strategy sub-strategies and implementation plans. The template for the risk register had been updated to support the Committee in identifying risks perceived to be outwith the University's risk appetite by removing the 'inherent risk' column and a risk classification introduced to highlight whether risks posed threats or opportunities. This approach would allow discussion to be focussed on those risks which required additional controls or on areas where the University may wish to increase its risk appetite.

Discussions focused on Risk 6 'staff experience' and Risk 12 'employee relations', both of which were perceived to be outwith the University's risk appetite. Members agreed that it could be beneficial to carry out a joint risk 'deep dive' session on staff experience with the People and Organisational Development Committee (PODCo). It was agreed that the Convener would discuss how and whether to schedule this with the Convener of PODCo during 2022/2023 year as strategy implementation plans developed.

In discussion, the Committee requested that defined dates be added to the Review Date column as opposed to the term 'Ongoing'. Members agreed that in order to discharge its governance responsibilities, the Committee required clarity on the delivery of expected actions.

In short, the Committee welcomed the new format of the risk register and the introduction of risk classification and agreed that the risks outlined were appropriate.

**Resolved:**

- (i) to endorse the new Institutional Risk Register;
- (ii) to review the register at its October 2022 meeting;
- (iii) to initiate discussions with the Convener of PODCo to develop plans for a blended deep dive session on associated risks on staff experience.



## 9. RISK CONTAGION REPORT

The Committee considered a report on risk contagion. The report comprised risk contagion visualisations which sought to illustrate the relationships between risks in the new institutional risk register but did not comment explicitly on the impact, likelihood or importance of any individual risk.

The Committee reviewed three visualisations: one depicting the relationships between all risks; one highlighting 'student experience'; and one highlighting 'cybersecurity'. Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the visualisations were helpful and that, going forwards, the approach taken to risk contagion would support Committee discussions on risk. It was agreed that the Risk & Business Continuity Manager would include some commentary on risk contagion in her annual report to the Committee.

**Resolved:** (i) to note the report.

## 10. 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.]

## 11. NARRATIVE FROM THE COMMITTEE TO THE COURT

It was agreed that the Convener's report to Court on 21 June 2022 would include: the discussion on the anti-malware update, with particular reference to the virtual desktop; the external audit planning report 2021/22; the approval of the internal audit plan 2022/23 plan; the approval of the new Institutional Risk Register aligned to the new University strategy; the risk contagion report which assisted the Committee to identify the linkages between different corporate risks; the consideration of a deep dive on staff experience risks in conjunction with PODCo and the update on the current status of the BT HRP implementation.

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

## 12. EXTERNAL AUDIT: FRAUD REPORT

The Committee received and considered a report from EY which provided analysis from EY's latest Global Integrity Survey, prepared by its Forensic & Integrity Services team shortly after the global pandemic had been declared. The survey had revealed that, while the pandemic had made it harder for businesses to act with integrity, more companies than ever valued corporate integrity and its benefit to reputation and employee retention.

**Resolved:** to note the 2022 Global Integrity report.

## 13. RISK MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT GROUP

The Committee noted the minutes from the meeting on 6 May 2022.

**Resolved:** to note the minutes.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** to note that the next meeting would be held on 16 August 2022, subject to approval of the 2022/23 Academic Calendar at Court in June 2022.

Keith Winter  
Convener

**Appendix 3****FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

A meeting of the Committee was held on 24 May 2022 via Microsoft Teams.

**Present:** Richard Bint (Convener);  
Alan Bainbridge;  
Tricia Bey;  
Ronald Bowie;  
Professor Sir Mike Ferguson;  
Professor Iain Gillespie (Principal & Vice-Chancellor);  
Ron Mobed; and  
Professor Mairi Scott

**In Attendance:** Amanda Millar Chair of Court Elect  
Professor Blair Grubb (Vice-Principal Education);  
Dr Neale Laker (Deputy University Secretary);  
Rose Jenkins (Director of Estates and Campus Services)  
Dr Morag Martin (Research Strategy and Development Officer)  
(Item 5)  
Dr David McBeth (Director of Research and Innovations Services)  
(Item 5);  
Dr Jim McGeorge (University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer);  
Professor Shane O'Neill (Senior Vice-Principal);  
Peter Fotheringham (Interim Director of Finance);  
Dr Alison Ramsay (Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance));  
Professor John Rowan (Vice-Principal Research, Knowledge Exchange &  
Wider Impact).  
Brian Thomson (Head of Projects, Estates); and  
Susan Young (Head of Financial Accounting)

**Apologies:** Keith Winter, Dimitris Vidakis.

**1. MINUTES**

- (1) Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee on 22 March 2022.

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the previous meeting. One member requested that the minute reflect their previous comment regarding the explicit inclusion of Ninewells in the Capital Plan.

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes of the meeting of 22 March 2022, subject to clarification of the minor amendment requested above.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

- (1) Action Log

Members received and considered the action log for the Committee. The Convener questioned the status of the review of the Treasury Policy (Minute 13 of 19 October 2021 refers) and was advised that a full review was required, which would be presented

to a future meeting of the Committee. Members also requested an update on progress made in relation to the review of student accommodation (Minute 11 of 22 March 22 refers) and were advised that the University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer would be meeting the Chief Executive of Dundee City Council imminently and would report to the Committee at its meeting in August 2022.

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

### 3. **BUDGET 2022/2023 TO 2026/2027**

The Interim Director of Finance introduced the above paper, intended to apprise the Committee of the proposed capital budget for 2022/2023, together with a further four-year Capital Plan to 2026/2027 (the Plan). The Committee was advised that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) normally required a three-year financial plan to be submitted by 30 June but that this had yet to be confirmed.

The Committee noted that the University had proven financially resilient during a challenging period of disruption caused by the global pandemic and in the context of an inflationary environment. Tuition fee income had been maintained in 2020/2021 and had grown significantly in 2021/2022 whilst cost savings had been achieved in all areas across both years. Cash resources had grown and progress made to identify additional improvements, with Academic Excellence & Sustainability (AES) initiatives now forming part of core plans. Members were advised that the 2022/2023 budget and five-year plan would deliver the first budgeted operating surplus in 10 years, and one year ahead of the target agreed by the Court in 2019.

In the course of a lengthy discussion, members considered inter alia the impact of inflation on the Plan, noting that anticipated wage pressures had increased the assumption on salary inflation. Energy and other cost inflation had also increased materially and, whilst the required adjustments were adverse to previous assumptions, they had been materially offset by higher net tuition fee income. Further growth in tuition fee income remained an aggressive target, although the budget reflected an anticipated slowdown as the University began to reach a point of capacity. Overseas fee income remained a key risk for the institution and the University would require to give strategic consideration to the future size and development of the University.

Following the Court's approval in April 2022 to approve EBITDA as a percentage of income as a performance measure, members noted that the Committee was being invited to approve a target of 7%. The Convener noted that whilst such a level of EBITDA would be sufficient to cover the costs of the financial plans and thus make the University financially sustainable, the paper indicated this level could be revisited in the longer term in the context of creating greater headroom for investment.

The impact of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) result on the Research Excellence Grant (REG) was noted, with members advised that the change in the submission method for REF 2021 had resulted in the largest institutions achieving significant gains. Whilst provision had been made in the plan for the estimated level of REG grant reduction, the Committee noted that further work would be required to analyse the granularity of the outcome, with a detailed report to be presented to the next meeting of the Court. Research income was budgeted to grow by 13% over the course of the Plan with the two largest research schools, Life Sciences and Medicine, expected to deliver more than half of the budgeted contribution to overhead.

Members were advised that capital expenditure had been budgeted in line with the draft capital plan previously approved by the Committee. Excluding the Tay Cities Deal, the Plan included capital expenditure of £192.6m across the five-year period, of which £26.1m was externally-funded by grants and other awards.

In general discussion, the Committee encouraged the University to consider more far-reaching and aspirational targets and to identify further areas of untapped potential for future development, with the concept of betterment in mind. Noting that the inflationary environment was likely to endure longer than had been anticipated, the Convener had requested that the Interim Director of Finance produce a report on the effects of inflation on the institution, to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

- Resolved:**
- (i) to recommend to Court approval of the Budget 2022/2023 and associated Financial Plan to 2026/2027; and
  - (ii) to approve the proposal to set a performance target of 7% EBITDA as a percentage of income.

#### 4. **BORROWING OUTLOOK**

The Committee received and considered the above report prepared by the University's external advisors, QMPF, intended to apprise the Committee of options available for borrowing and the feasibility of the different borrowing options. The Interim Director of Finance advised members that the report assessed the University's funding requirement in the context of the Capital Plan presented to the Committee in March. A funding requirement in the region of £50-£80m had been recommended as sufficient in order to support the Capital Plan over the proposed timeframe.

The report considered that Private Placement (PP) would be the most appropriate funding option and provided detailed assurance that, even at the level of £80m, the University would remain on the lower end of gearing in the sector and that existing covenants would be broadly achievable. Timing, the initial quantum and the relationship with the revolving credit facility would require to be carefully considered. The Convener shared management's concerns regarding the recommendations from QMPF on repayment and requested that management investigate alternatives.

The Committee expressed concern that the proposed timeline for external borrowing could result in higher interest rates being charged and requested that management give consideration to acting early and to consider the potential consequences of borrowing at a higher amount. In discussion, members sought assurances in relation to the large capital expenditure projects envisaged and requested further information on preparations for the three essential projects, including design proposals and project management arrangements.

The Director of Estates and Campus Services advised the Committee that recent discussions had identified an alternative to a captive heating system which could reduce the costs currently associated with the Campus Energy Infrastructure Project with the additional benefit of reducing institutional risk. Further conversations on revenue models would be held during June and a proposal brought back to the Committee.

Members considered the importance of project governance reassurance for the lender and noted that short, ad hoc meetings of the Committee could be required to progress the borrowing proposals.

**Resolved:** (i) to note the update.

[Secretary's note: Dr David McBeth and Dr Morag Martin joined the meeting at this point]

#### 5. **RESERVED BUSINESS: TAY CITIES INNOVATION HUB**

[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 received and considered an update on progress to date with the Tay Cities Innovation Hub and associated risks.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

[Secretary's note: Dr David McBeth and Dr Morag Martin left the meeting at this point]

#### 6. **ESTATES & CAMPUS SERVICES REPORT**

The Director of Estates introduced the above regular report on Estates and Campus Services activities noting that, as of May 2022, all previous estates-related Covid restrictions had been removed from Campus, with buildings open Monday to Friday with specific exceptions, such as the Library and DJCAD. The Committee was advised that projects in Year 3 of the Estates Strategy were largely proceeding as planned with some exceptions, including: the Tower Building cladding project; the demolition of 16-18 Airlie Place; the Tay Cities Deal; the Centre for Protein Degradation; and the AES MSRU project to move the resource unit from Ninewells to the City Campus.

Members were apprised of increased budgetary challenges arising from the impact of the global pandemic, the UK's exit from the European Union and the war in Ukraine, all of which had disrupted supply chain management. The Director of Estates and Campus Services advised the Committee that tenders submitted in relation to capital projects had been significantly higher than anticipated and that a number of strategies were being considered to manage these issues.

The Committee noted that Project Boards had been established to govern the Crawford Project at DJCAD, the Business School and the Energy Infrastructure Project, which had been discussed above under Paper D. Members were further apprised of developments in negotiations regarding the Ninewells campus.

Thereafter, the Committee welcomed the report and requested that the Director of Estates and Campus Services and the Interim Director of Finance keep members apprised of any key developments in the above-named projects.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

#### 7. **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE UPDATE**

The Interim Director of Finance introduced the above regular report, intended to provide the Committee with an update on a range of activities. Members were advised that, whilst the SFC funding allocation for 2022/2023 had not been confirmed, officers had budgeted for and anticipated a reduction in funding. Additionally, based on modelling of the 2021 REF outcome, it was anticipated that the REG allocation for the University would decrease. It was noted that

a report would be submitted to the August meeting of the Committee which would analyse the confirmed allocation.

The Committee was advised that SFC had released its annual report on the financial sustainability of the FE and HE sectors and members apprised that the University's position was moving closer to sector averages. Cash resources for the sector had improved during 2020/2021 and borrowing levels had remained stable

Members were reminded that the Committee had approved a number of small changes to the Treasury Management Policy, which had included adding Natwest as an additional counterparty and increasing the limits of a number of existing counterparties. Given that the cash resources of the University continued to be positive and that tuition fee income was expected to generate short term peaks, it was proposed that a further counterparty was added.

**Resolved:** (i) to approve the proposal to add JP Morgan to the list of counterparties; and  
(ii) to note the update.

#### 8. **RESERVED BUSINESS: 2022/2023 STUDENT INTAKE UPDATE**

[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.]

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 9. **QUARTER 3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Interim Director of Finance introduced the draft management accounts for the period to 30 April 2022 (Q3). Excluding funds held for strategic investment, cash at the end of Q3 was £65.4m.

The updated operating forecast presented a £13.7m improvement from budget and a £1.3m improvement from Q2. The operating position at 30 April was noted as a £3.5m surplus against a deficit budget to date of £13.4m. This constituted a favourable variance of £16.9m, which provided confidence that the financial forecast would be achieved.

International fee income was forecast at £10.2m ahead of budget, £9.3m of which related to taught postgraduate students. Fee income for international research students was noted as £0.5m behind budget.

**Resolved:** to note the accounts.

#### 10. **BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION UPDATE**

The University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer updated members on progress with the Business Transformation programme.

In relation to HR/Payroll, members noted that testing of the HR elements of the system and the outcomes of parallel payroll runs continued to be very positive. Commercial discussions

had concluded and a reset plan agreed. It was anticipated that the HR system would go live in October, with two months of prior testing to be undertaken.

The University Secretary then briefed members confidentially on the current situation in relation to those elements of the research (stage 1) solution that were not yet live. The Committee noted the position and the status of commercial discussions with TechnologyOne.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 11. **NARRATIVE FOR COURT**

The Committee agreed to highlight to the Court its discussions relating to the Budget 2022/2023 and associated 5-year financial plan, the borrowing outlook and current financial position, the Tay Cities Innovation Hub and major projects.

**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 4 November 2021, 09 December 2022, 20 January 2022, 22 February 2022 and 24 March 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 indicated that, to date, the value of awards in 2021/22 (£48.4m) was higher than previous years at the same period. 76% of grants were submitted by Schools of Medicine (62), Life Sciences (48) and Science & Engineering (20). In terms of award value, however, 69% of the total £48.4m sat within the School of Life Sciences.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

#### 14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members noted that this was the last meeting for the DUSA President to have attended. On behalf of the Committee, the Convener thanked Mr Vidakis for his commitment to the work of the Committee and extended every good wish for his future success.

#### 15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** to note that the next meeting would take place on 2 August 2022.

Richard Bint  
(Convener)



**Appendix 4****GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

A meeting of the Committee was held on 24 May 2022 via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Ronald Bowie (Convener);  
Tricia Bey;  
Principal Professor Iain Gillespie;  
Jane Marshall;  
Dr Anna Notaro; and  
Sharon Sweeney (Items 11 to 21)

<u>In Attendance</u>	Amanda Millar	Chair of Court Elect
	Professor Blair Grubb	(Vice-Principal (Education));
	Dr Neale Laker	(Deputy University Secretary & Director of Academic & Corporate Governance); and
	Dr Alison Ramsay	(Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance) & Clerk to Court).

Apologies: Megan-Rose Birdsall.

**1. MINUTES**

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes of the meeting of 22 March 2022.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**Action Log

The Committee received an action log summarising progress in relation to outstanding actions from previous meetings. Members noted that the forthcoming changes to lay Court membership would affect the skills composition of the governing body and that the skills matrix would be reviewed when new appointments had been made.

**Resolved:** (i) to note that the skills matrix would be revisited following appointments to the lay membership of Court; and

(ii) to note the Action Log.

**3. CONVENER'S UPDATE**

The Convener updated the Committee on activities and interactions undertaken at a sectoral level which would be of relevance to the Committee. Members were advised that the Convener had been unable to attend the most recent meeting of the UK Committee of University Chairs and that meetings of the network of Scottish University Chairs appeared to have fallen into abeyance. Members encouraged the Chair of Court Elect to work with the Deputy University Secretary and the Clerk to Court in an effort to re-establish these helpful interactions.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 4. **SECTORAL UPDATE**

The Deputy University Secretary advised the Committee that he expected to apprise members of progress on the review of the Scottish Code of Good Higher education Governance at a future meeting.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 5. **APPOINTMENT OF LAY MEMBERS OF COURT**

The Committee was apprised that, as permitted under Statute 9(2)(h), Richard Bint had intimated his willingness to remain on Court for a further year and a formal recommendation would be made to the Court at its next meeting.

Members then received a verbal report from the Deputy University Secretary on progress to date in the recruitment and selection of new lay members of Court. Dr Laker advised that, to date, the appointing panel had agreed to make a recommendation to appoint one of those already interviewed and that a further final interview would be held with an applicant who had been unable to attend previously. The Committee was requested to delegate to the Panel the authority to make the recommendation to the Court at its meeting in June.

In discussion, members expressed disappointment in the apparent lack of interest and considered how best to optimise the recruitment process, noting the imperative for additional financial strength on the Court. The Committee urged management to make use of as wide a range of contacts and networks as possible in seeking recommendations for individuals potentially interested in membership of the Court in future.

The Deputy University Secretary further advised members that, following the local elections, the Chief Executive of Dundee City Council had been nominated to join the Court. The Committee welcomed the nomination of Gregory Colgan to the membership of Court.

**Resolved:** (i) to delegate to the appointing panel the authority to make recommendations to the Court regarding the appointment of lay members; and  
(ii) to update Court on progress made in the recruitment and selection of new lay members of Court.

#### 6. **UPDATE ON ANNUAL MEETINGS BETWEEN CHAIR/DEPUTY CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COURT**

The Convener advised the Committee that he and the Deputy Chair of Court were in the process of conducting the annual meetings with members of the Court. It was intended that the meetings be concluded by the end of May, at which time the Convener and the Deputy Chair of Court would produce a report to be shared with the Chair of Court Elect as part of their induction process.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

#### 7. **MEMBERSHIP OF THE COURT AND ITS COMMITTEES**

The Deputy University Secretary introduced the above paper, intended to apprise the Committee of issues relating to succession planning and the membership of Court and its

Committees in 2022/2023. Dr Laker advised members that the appointment of Amanda Millar as the next Chair of Court had been endorsed and formally approved by the Court at its meeting on 26 April 2022 and that an induction and transition process was being developed.

The Committee noted that, as already intimated above (paragraph 5 refers) and as permitted under Statute 9(2)(h), Richard Bint had intimated his willingness to remain on Court for a further year. A formal recommendation would be made to the Court at its next meeting.

Whilst the Committee noted that some positions remained unfilled at the time of writing, these would be subject to further review by the incoming Chair of Court. In considering membership for the 2022/2023 academic session and in view of the appointment of a new Chair of Court, committee compositions had remained as they were for the previous year, with minor adjustments arising from new members. Members were supportive of the proposals submitted and confirmed that they were content that the suggestions appropriately balanced both the skills needs of the committees and provided the opportunity to refresh memberships through the rotation of members between committees.

- Resolved:**
- (i) to recommend to Court that Richard Bint be appointed to an additional year of membership to 31 July 2023 under Statute 9(2)(h);
  - (ii) to recommend in principle and subject to the final decision of the appointing panel, that Court appoint Professor Garry Taylor to the membership of the Court for four years in the first instance to 31 July 2026;
  - (iii) otherwise to delegate to the appointing panel the authority to make further recommendations for Court membership, or for membership of the Audit & Risk Committee, direct to the Court at its meeting on 21 June 2022, noting specifically the intention of the panel to appoint a member with financial experience; and
  - (iv) to endorse the proposed committee memberships for 2022/2023, as outlined in the Appendix to this minute, subject to finalization with the Chair of Court, the Chair of Court Elect and officers.

## 8. **FORMAT FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Deputy University Secretary sought feedback from the Committee regarding preferences for the format of future meetings of the Court and its Committees. Members were reminded that meetings of the Court in 2021/2022 had been held in person, with those unable to attend in person joining the meeting remotely and that the majority of Court committee meetings had been held remotely during the session. In addition, at least one meeting of each committee had been convened in person in order to provide opportunities for informal networking.

In discussion, members acknowledged the flexibility of hybrid meetings for those unable to travel or who might not feel comfortable in large gatherings but agreed that Court meetings should be held in person as far as was possible and that all lay and co-opted members should be encouraged to attend. It was agreed that committee Conveners would give

consideration to whether meetings of their committees should be held in-person or online, depending on the nature of the business to be considered. Members recognised that the strength of the Court lay in the strong relationships between the University Executive and lay members, which required personal and social interaction to be established.

**Resolved:** to note that officers would work with the Chair of Court Elect and Conveners to consider options ahead of the next meeting of the Committee on 2 August 2022.

#### 9. **ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF COURT / CHAIR OF COURT EFFECTIVENESS**

The Deputy University Secretary invited the Committee to consider the format for the annual review of the effectiveness of Court. Members noted that the questionnaire was a lengthy document to complete and that much of the qualitative aspects of the questionnaire were being covered in the one-to-one meetings held by the Chair of Court and the Deputy Chair of Court. It was agreed that the Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance) would remove the qualitative elements of the questionnaire and circulate to Committee members for comment before being disseminated to the wider Court. It was to be hoped that a shorter questionnaire would encourage greater completion rates.

In view of Ronnie Bowie's departure as Chair of Court, the Committee was also invited to give particular consideration to how it wished to conduct the annual review of the Chair's effectiveness, or indeed whether it wished to proceed with such a review. Members agreed that it would not be a meaningful exercise to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the outgoing Chair of Court.

**Resolved:**

- (i) to note that the evaluation questionnaire for the annual review of the Court's effectiveness would be amended and circulated to committee members for comment; and
- (ii) to note that a review of the effectiveness of the outgoing Chair of Court would not be appropriate.

#### 10. **EARLY-STAGE COURT BUSINESS**

The Committee received a report on Early-Stage Court business for the meeting on 21 June 2022 for discussion and comment. Members were advised that it remained the intention to hold the meeting in person, subject to any changes in Scottish Government guidance. The Committee agreed that the pre-Court briefing would take the form of an initial discussion on the future size and shape of the institution.

The Committee noted that the key business of the meeting would include a report on the University's performance in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. This was expected to delineate the reputational and financial impact of the outcome on the institution and would impact on future strategic discussions around the size and shape of the University. In addition, the Court expected to give detailed consideration to the Budget for 2022/2023 and the associated five-year plan and would receive an update on the University's Outcome Agreement for 2021/2022.

**Resolved:** to note the proposed Early-Stage Court business paper.

**11. ANNUAL REVIEW: REMUNERATION OF THE CHAIR OF COURT**

The Committee considered a paper which set out the recommended payment to be made in respect of the time commitment associated with the duties of the Chairperson of Court. Members noted that the Chairperson had previously indicated that he did not wish to be remunerated, but had asked that an equivalent payment be made for the benefit of existing students, it being for the University to determine how precisely the money should be expended. The Committee noted the total payment for 2021/22 was estimated to be in the region of 65 days £21,970 (£338x65) and delegated authority to the Deputy University Secretary to reconcile the final payment as of 31 July 2022.

Finally, the Committee agreed that the rate for remuneration of the Chair of Court for the next financial year should continue to match the Public Sector Pay Policy Technical Guide. Members noted that the guide set the Tier 1 Minimum for 2022/23 at £340 per diem.

**Resolved:**

- (i) to delegate authority to the Deputy University Secretary for the final reconciliation and payment based on a report from the Chair of Court confirming the time required to carry out his duties; and
- (ii) to note the per diem rate of £340 which will apply for 2022/2023

**12. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCHEDULE OF DELEGATION**

The Deputy University Secretary advised the Committee that officers had reviewed the Schedule of Delegation and determined that no amendments were required.

**Resolved:** to note the Schedule of Delegation.

**13. REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

The Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance) reminded the Committee that the annual review of register of interest returns by senior officers presented at the previous meeting had suggested that the return rate was as low as 50%. Members were advised that, following further interrogation of the data, the return rate had improved significantly with only a small number outstanding. The Committee noted that no declarations had been identified which required discussion by the Committee.

**Resolved:** (i) to note the report.

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

The Committee recommended that the Convener highlight the following items to the Court: Recommendations regarding the appointment of new lay members of Court, feedback from one-to-one meetings with lay members, future meetings and the annual report on Quality & Academic Standards.

**15. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Committee welcomed the report from the Director of Quality & Academic Standards and discussions focussed on the development of programme selection criteria and programme approval guidance. The Committee commended the work of the Quality & Academic Standards Team in maintaining standards during the period of the pandemic and noted that successful outcomes had remained within the pre-pandemic range, despite

enormous disruption. The Vice-Principal (Education) advised members that this demonstrated the value of the enhanced no detriment approach and the continuing and evolving response to the pandemic.

The Committee noted that the Education and Student Experience Planning Steering Group continued to focus on the planning, coordination and management of student focused activities and services during the academic year. The group was also responsible for managing any changes required as a result of emerging guidance or legislation from either the Scottish Government or the Scottish Funding Council (SFC.) The group was noted as having worked to ensure that the student learning experience continued to be developed in the context of changes to delivery approach and areas such as the digital learning environment, assessment, communication, recruitment and admissions, amongst others.

Professor Grubb went on to outline future work planned in relation to curriculum design and the creation of guidance to support academic colleagues in curriculum design/ programme development. In discussion, members questioned whether there was a correlation between the pattern of module withdrawals and the development of the Academic Excellence and Sustainability Strategy and were advised that Schools were in the process of finalising 5-year portfolio plans, which were intended to reduce staff workload by reducing the number of modules with low student numbers.

**Resolved:** to note the report and recommend to the Court that it consider the quality assurance process to be robust when reviewing the annual report to the SFC on quality.

#### 16. **CHAIR OF COURT ELECTION DIVERSITY REPORT**

The Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance) introduced the above report on the recent election of the Chair of Court, including the process followed and the result by constituency. Members also received a breakdown of the protected characteristics at application stage, according to the data provided by Perett Laver and noted that these would be published online, in accordance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

#### 17. **ELECTION RESULTS**

**Resolved:** (i) to note the results of the 2022 DUSA Elections; and  
(ii) to formally note the election of Susan Walker as the non-academic member of Staff Council on Court.

#### 18. **GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY: RETURNS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COURT**

**Resolved:** to note that no declarations had been made by members in 2021/2022.

#### 19. **UPDATE ON TRAINING MODULE COMPLETION**

The Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance) provided an update on completion rates for Court members in relation to the mandatory Equality, Diversity & Inclusion modules. The Court was satisfied with the rate of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion module completion, with

the exception of a very small number of individuals who would be reminded of their responsibility to complete the training modules

**Resolved:** to note that the Deputy University Secretary would contact members individually with regard to outstanding modules.

20. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Deputy Chair of Court reminded members that this would be the last meeting of the Committee attended and convened by Ronnie Bowie, whose term of office as Chair of Court would come to an end on 31 July 2022. On behalf of the Committee, the Deputy Chair of Court expressed the warm thanks of members to the outgoing Chair of Court for a sustained period of stewardship during which the University had grown and prospered.

The Chair of Court in turn thanked members for their commitment to the work of the Committee throughout the year.

21. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** to note that the next meeting would be held on 2 August 2022.

**Appendix 4, Annex 1****Committee Memberships 2022/23****Audit & Risk Committee (A&RC)**

Keith Winter (Convener)  
 Tricia Bey  
 Andy Lothian  
 Susan Walker  
 Irene Wilson (subject to confirmation by Court)

Richard Bint (In attendance as Convener F&PC)

**Finance & Policy Committee (F&PC)**

Richard Bint (Convener)  
 Amanda Millar  
 Iain Gillespie  
 Alan Bainbridge  
 Mike Ferguson  
 Ron Mobed  
 Nyasha Mutembwa  
 Carla Rossini (subject to confirmation by Court)  
 Mairi Scott  
 Garry Taylor (subject to confirmation by Court)

Tricia Bey (In attendance as Deputy Chairperson)  
 Keith Winter (In attendance as Convener A&RC)

**Governance & Nominations Committee (G&NC)**

Amanda Millar (Convener)  
 Iain Gillespie  
 Tricia Bey  
 Jane Marshall  
 Anna Notaro  
 Adam Robertson  
 Sharon Sweeney

**People & Organisational Development Committee (PODCo)**

Jane Marshall (Convener)  
 David Martin  
 Emma Preston  
 Karthik Subramanya  
 Jay Surti  
 Karen Thomson

**Remuneration Committee**

Karen Thomson (Convener)  
 Amanda Millar  
 Ron Mobed  
 Nyasha Mutembwa  
 Sharon Sweeney  
 Garry Taylor (subject to confirmation by Court)

Jane Marshall (In attendance as Convener PODCo)  
 Iain Gillespie (In attendance as required)

**Pensions Sub-Group**

Jane Marshall (Convener, tbc)  
 Amanda Millar  
 Irene Wilson/Carla Rossini (subject to confirmation by Court)  
 Garry Taylor (tbc)

**Endowments Sub-Committee**

Richard Bint (Convener, pro tem)  
 Nyasha Mutembwa  
 Karthik Subramanya (tbc)

**Business Transformation Steering Committee (BT SteerCo) Court representative**

Keith Winter

**Welfare & Ethical Use of Animals Committee (WEC) Court representative**

Andy Lothian



## Appendix 5

### PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

A meeting of the Committee was held on 18 May 2022 by Microsoft Teams.

Present: Jane Marshall (Convener);  
Karthik Subramanya;  
Dr David Martin; and  
Jay Surti.

In Attendance: Professor Iain Gillespie Principal  
Professor Hari Hundal University of Dundee Race Equality Charter Lead  
(item 8);  
Dr Neale Laker Deputy University Secretary;  
Dr Jim McGeorge University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer;  
Patricia Matheson Interim Director of Human Resources &  
Organisational Development;  
Professor Shane O'Neill Senior Vice-Principal;  
George Simmonds Equality and Diversity Officer (for item 7);  
Kenny Stewart Policy Officer (Corporate Governance);  
Julie Strachan Deputy Director of Human Resources &  
Organisational Development; and  
Dimitris Vidakis DUSA President.

Observing: Amanda Millar Chair of Court Elect;  
Emma Preston

Apologies: Rebecca Leiper,  
Karen Thomson.

#### 1. MINUTES

(i) Minutes from the meeting on 14 March 2022.

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

#### 2. MATTERS ARISING

(1) Action Log

The Committee reviewed the action log.

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

### 3. CONVENER'S UPDATE

The Convener informed members that she had had meetings with senior staff to discuss shaping the strategic nature of the Committee's workplan in the medium to long term, driven by the implementation plan for the People & Talent Strategy. This would be considered under item 5 of the agenda. The Convener noted further that, as the Graduate Representative on Court, she had contributed to an article on the new strategic direction of the University for the Magdalen Student Magazine.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

### 4. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW & SECTORAL UPDATE

The Committee received a Strategic Overview paper from Interim Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD) which highlighted a number of matters of relevance to the remit of the Committee. The report provided updates on the three strategic themes in the implementation plan for the People & Talent (P&T) Sub-Strategy: Culture, Leadership and Talent. The report also delivered high level summaries on Organisational Change and Business Transformation projects.

Under the Leadership theme, the report included an update on the revised Academic Staff appraisal process, delivered as part of the Academic Excellence and Sustainability (AES) Staff Workstream. It highlighted the scheduled launch of the new process on an interim basis. The process would be expected to be completed within a clear timeline between April and July each year, with clear areas for review aligned to strategy objectives. Campus union consultation on the process was due to commence ahead of the planned roll out in the 2022/23 academic year, which would include training of staff in the use of the new process. The Committee discussed whether the operational timeline for annual appraisal might be altered to then period from May to August and officers agreed to feed this back into the review process for consideration. It was accepted that the P&T Sub-Strategy implementation could see further development of the process, hence the interim nature of what was currently being developed.

Under the Talent theme, a review of the University's web presence was in progress, designed to improve search and recruitment processes to attract the best candidates. A further part of this workstream was the review of current induction processes across the Schools and Directorates. This would include a review of good practice in other sectors as well as within Higher Education. The main item under the Culture theme was the results of the Staff Pulse Survey, to be discussed under item 6 of the agenda.

Organisational Change proposals for the New Combined School continued to make progress throughout May with initial discussions with affected staff and consultation with campus unions. This would be followed by a period of collective consultation.

The Committee heard that USS pension reform proposals had been subject to recent consultation and were subsequently in the process of being implemented. Members were aware of the University and College Union (UCU) longstanding industrial action at a national level over the proposals, and noted that the local branch of UCU had successfully re-balloted members to participate in a marking and assessment boycott from 23 May 2022.

The Committee heard that Unison strike action had ended on Friday 13 May, after a period of four weeks. Members noted that around 170 members of staff were on strike in the first week of industrial action, with between 60 and 70 in subsequent weeks. The University had introduced mitigations to reduce the impact on students as much as possible.

The Committee noted senior appointments to the Deputy University Secretary role, and the appointment of a new Dean for the School Health Sciences. An announcement on the appointment of a new Dean for the School of Humanities, Social Science & Law would be made shortly.

The formal consultation on the University's proposals to altering the University of Dundee Superannuation Scheme (UoDSS) commenced on 8 April, and 10 staff consultation meetings had taken place to date. The Committee heard that additional sessions were being planned at Unison's request. Members also noted that the Unite union would be balloting members on possible further industrial action in relation to this issue.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

## 5. PEOPLE AND TALENT SUB-STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Committee received a paper for discussion on the implementation plan for the People & Talent (P&T) Sub-Strategy. The plan formed part of the new University Strategy, to be launched in mid-June 2022 to all staff. The paper confirmed that the Committee would from time to time receive updates on the progress of the P&T Implementation Plan at appropriate intervals.

Members discussed the adoption of the institutional KPI for the P&T strategy. This had been proposed as the proportion of positive responses to the staff engagement survey question: 'the University is a good place to work'. It was proposed that the year 5 target for this measure was to be within the top quartile of UK universities. It was confirmed that operational planning outcomes would act as a second order of KPIs. These included delivery of the University's equality charter action plan commitments. The Committee would have the opportunity to monitor progress towards the achievement of these objectives through its workplan at regular intervals.

The Committee considered items contained within the Strategy Implementation Plan under its themes of Culture, Talent and Transformative Leadership. Actions within each theme were mapped across the five-year span of the implementation plan, and were tied to listed outcomes. In discussion members considered whether UEG was confident that the appropriate support was in place to deliver on actions contained within the P&T implementation plan. Members raised the example of reports of variable access to mentoring as an indication that plan actions would need to be adequately resourced and communicated.

Officers were keen for the Committee to use its expertise to support the successful implementation of the plan. The Committee discussed how it would exercise its role in articulating whether whether intended strategic outcomes had been delivered, and how the staff outcomes would be successfully measured. Members noted that this would be more successfully achieved through the adoption of quantitative measures using baseline data for comparison.

- Resolved:**
- (i) To include in the committee plan of work progress reviews in 2022/23 as well as ongoing updates from the Director of HR &OD;
  - (ii) to schedule a standing Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) agenda item for future meetings;
  - (iii) to schedule a meeting between the Convener, Senior Vice-Principal and Director of HR &OD to further shape the Committee's remit and role in steering the P&T implementation plan.

## 6. PULSE SURVEY RESULTS

The Committee received a presentation from the Interim Director HR&OD on the results of the most recent Staff Pulse Survey, which was conducted during March 2022. At its March meeting the Committee received a paper which outlined a revised approach to staff engagement through the inclusion of short pulse surveys, scheduled to fall between the more comprehensive biennial staff survey to gauge staff views on aspects of university activity. An accessible survey dashboard had been developed, and a results summary prepared for the Committee.

The focus of the first pulse survey had been the University's organisational culture, with staff asked to respond to a series of statements on the degree to which their School or Directorate valued individual staff contributions; provided support for equality, flexible working, career development and mental health & wellbeing; addressed bullying and harassment; and had mitigated the impact of Covid-19.

Survey results had been analysed by School and Directorate and were currently being reviewed by them for discussion and action. Results analysis by protected characteristic had been shared with Equality Charter Teams to assist development of actions at institutional level.

The overall response rate had been 32%, with the School rate slightly lower at 30%. Results showed that most people in directorates felt their contributions were valued, But that across Schools, results showed that staff generally felt like their contributions were not valued as much. Mental health and wellbeing scores were particularly low in schools which were undergoing change processes: Humanities, Social Science and Engineering.

The breakdown of results by selected protected characteristics showed that female and LGBT+ respondents tended to be more positive in their response to survey questions. BAME members of staff tended to be less positive on active support for equality and addressing bullying and harassment.

The Committee discussed how to improve the level of staff engagement with future surveys. It was noted that HR&OD would expect to see a response rate above 70% for the staff survey, with rates for short, in-cycle pulse surveys typically in the range 30-35%. Results provided a baseline to measure future progress throughout a period of organisational change.

The Committee welcomed the results noting the range of responses for each School and Directorate.

**Resolved:** to note the Staff Pulse Survey Results.

## 7. ATHENA SWAN APPLICATION UPDATE

The Committee received an update paper on the University's Athena Swan application for information. The paper documented progress on the work of the Self-Assessment Team (SAT) in preparation for the submission of the University's Athena Swan Charter application. The University had achieved institutional Bronze award status in 2013, and was in the process of renewing its application for the award.

The paper noted that an initial draft of the new Athena Swan action plan was in development, and would be aligned with the new University strategy, and the People & Talent Sub-Strategy in particular. The SAT acknowledged the need to reimagine the action plan for the new application to ensure it was more outcomes based, measurable and consistent with the principles and direction of other charter work.

The timeline and milestones for completion of the application had been established to allow for executive and governance oversight during the October Committee cycle prior to submission in late 2022.

The Committee discussed the intersection between the University's commitment to the Athena Swan Charter with other initiatives and benchmarking activities. Members noted that a communication strategy for Athena Swan was to be developed to communicate outcomes more effectively with staff.

**Resolved:** to note the Athena Swan Application update.

## 8. RACE EQUALITY CHARTER

The Committee received an update paper on the Race Equality Charter (REC) from the Implementation Team Lead for discussion. Advance HE had awarded the University a Bronze Charter mark for a five year period in December 2021. The paper reported on the current status of the University's REC programme, overseen by the REC implementation team (RECIT), comprising a range of senior staff to foster ownership and responsibility for completing actions in areas closely aligned to their institutional remit.

The report provided a comprehensive update on the prioritisation of REC planning actions that had been completed or were in progress. In total, the REC Action Plan included 81 actions to be implemented across a five-year span.

Members were encouraged by the breadth of work in progress. Proactive engagement within the University's BAME Staff Network had led to the nomination of BAME staff for opportunities on Advance HE's leadership programme.

The Committee discussed the RECIT's main challenges and barriers to progress. The RECIT Lead acknowledged that implementation of change was a significantly bigger challenge than the submission of the Charter application and application. To succeed in changing organisational culture on race and other equality issues the process required co-ordination across Schools and Directorates and incremental change to organisational culture.

- Resolved:**
- (i) to record its appreciation to the RECIT team for their work to date;
  - (ii) to note the Race Equality Charter update report;
  - (iii) to consider a future update on the Race Equality Charter action plan at a future meeting of the Committee.

## 9. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

### (1) Merit Awards

The Deputy Director of HR&OD introduced a summary of outcomes from the University's annual Merit Award process in 2020-21. This covered the award of Contribution Related Points (CRPs) and Accelerated Advancement (AAs) for Grade 1-9 staff.

The report confirmed there had been 63 nominations for Merit Awards in 2021 with 43 staff members receiving an award, a success rate of 68%. The report acknowledged that the number of nominations had increased post Covid, but highlighted that the success rate rate was lower than the 76% in 2020 and 73% in 2019.

HR&OD had undertaken work to improve submission rates for merit awards for staff in the lowest categories. It was also noted that the proportion of BAME staff nominated and successfully receiving an award was proportionally lower than the overall average. Members heard that the Race Equality Charter Implementation Team had already identified actions on Merit Awards to be taken forward as part of the University's Race Equality Action Plan.

**Resolved:** to note the update.

## 10. HYBRID WORKING POLICY UPDATE

The Committee received a paper which provided an update on the Hybrid Working Pilot for information. The pilot had been trialled for Professional Services staff in October 2021, and evaluation of the pilot was due to be completed by the end of May 2022. The paper provided an overview of the hybrid working pilot, information on the numbers of Professional Services staff that had taken part and the feedback received on the pilot to date. It also provided an outline of the project evaluation timescales.

Information and feedback collected as part of the evaluation process would be presented to UEG as a summary of key findings and recommendations. UEG would be making a decision on the University's future approach to hybrid working in June 2022, with arrangements to be communicated to staff thereafter.

**Resolved:** to note the Hybrid Working Pilot Update report.

## 11. COURT NARRATIVE

It was agreed that the Convener's report to Court on 15 June 2022 would include reference to discussions on how the Committee's future workplan could usefully assist delivery of the implementation plan for the People and Talent Sub- Strategy. Further reference would be

made to the results of the first staff pulse survey on University culture, and updates on the progress of the Athena Swan application process and REC implementation plans.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Convener acknowledged that the Interim Director for HR&OD would be leaving the University at the end of May 2022. The Committee thanked her for her contribution towards the development of the P&T Sub-Strategy implementation, as well as her leadership through a period of substantial change within the HR&OD Directorate and the organisation generally.

## **13. RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

The Committee received the Researcher Development Policy for information. The Researcher Development Policy had been approved by the Research Governance and Policy Sub-Committee on 19th April. The report noted that the policy had been updated to include new areas of commitment which had arisen from the revised Concordat as well as other agreements.

**Resolved:** to note the updated Researcher Development Policy.

## **14. RESEARCH MANAGERS TRAINING REQUIREMENTS REPORT**

The Committee received a paper which set out consultation findings from managers of researchers with regard to their training needs. The report found that engagement with management training on the part of managers of research staff appeared to be limited and the report set out recommendations to improve outcomes.

**Resolved:** to note the Research Managers Training Requirements Report.

## **15. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

The Committee noted the minutes from the meeting of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee on 28 April 2022.

**Resolved:** to note the minutes.

## **16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** Thursday 27 October 2022 (subject to approval of the 2022/23 Academic Calendar by Court)

Jane Marshall  
Convener

## Appendix 6

### STAFF COUNCIL MINUTES

An online meeting of the Council was held on 23 May 2022.

**Present:** 30 Members of Staff (in person) and 250 Members of Staff (online)

**Convener:** The Principal

**In Attendance:** Members of UEG and Secretary to the Council.

**Preliminary Remarks:** The Principal welcomed the opportunity to hold the meeting of Staff Council in person for the first time since 2020.

#### 1. PRINCIPAL'S QUESTIONS

(for this item the Convener of the Standing Committee took the Chair)

##### **Voluntary Severance Scheme**

**Many staff are concerned about the lack of transparency over the Voluntary Severance Scheme in the new School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law. What are the potential implications for staff workloads, teaching provision and the student experience in the new School if staff numbers are significantly reduced under the proposed Scheme?**

The Principal expressed regret over the premature local press publication of proposals for a Voluntary Severance (VS) scheme under consideration by the University. He explained that the University had a well-established process for consultation with the campus unions and staff groups that might be affected by a VS scheme. He reflected that the partial and selective details published in the press had undermined the agreed process and likely caused unnecessary anxiety for staff and students in the new School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law.

The Principal explained that the main purpose of the proposals was to help ensure a strong and resilient future for the University by building on academic excellence and ending chronic financial deficits. He noted that the results from the REF 2021 provided further evidence that the University needed to focus on academic excellence for a more sustainable future.

The Senior Vice-Principal noted that the University had followed correct procedures for collective consultation on the proposals. He explained that a business case had been shared with the campus unions and that further meetings were planned as the proposals developed.

The Senior Vice-Principal noted that staff in the Schools most affected by the structural changes were keen for full details of the plan and proposals to be circulated. He explained that the required consultation procedures were underway and that information would be shared as soon as possible within the consultative framework.

The Senior Vice-Principal reflected on the question of workloads in the context of planning for the new School. He explained that the new structure would provide an opportunity to rationalise areas of activity to achieve efficiencies in the delivery of teaching and administrative support. He noted that these efficiencies, even in the context of reduced staff numbers could be expected to have positive effects on overall staff workload in the new School.

The Principal acknowledged the anxiety felt by staff over the proposals for a VS scheme, as consultation with the unions worked through, and the unhelpful premature publication of details



in the press. He confirmed that clarity on the proposals and full engagement with staff affected would follow in the first week of June 2022.

The Principal was asked to comment on the potential loss of academic expertise in areas of social, political and environmental policy due to the planned Voluntary Severance Scheme in the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law.

The Principal said the new School needed to retain the capability for academic excellence in line with the University's strategic priorities. He noted that proposals for the VS Scheme and further discussion on academic priorities would follow in due course. The Principal emphasised the need for the University to respond to the REF 2021 results, acknowledge that it was not doing well enough in some areas and act strategically to invest in areas of academic excellence.

The Senior Vice-Principal agreed that the new School ought to have a clear focus on the most pressing social and environmental research challenges. He noted that academic excellence needed to be delivered alongside financial sustainability.

The Senior Vice-Principal explained that he would work with the new School to take forward proposals that would include building critical mass in areas of activity that would deliver real impact and help meet future challenges. He emphasised the need for the proposals to be developed from a secure and sustainable financial position.

### **Pensions Update**

**Will the Principal provide an update on the UoDSS Pensions situation and explain what the next steps will be? What will the University do to mitigate against potential disruption to marking and exam boards at the end of Semester2?**

**Will the Principal comment on the latest evidence provided to the USS Joint Negotiating Committee that the value of USS assets has increased and the Scheme's deficit has decreased significantly since the 2020 valuation? What will be the likely impact of this (improved) interim valuation on the position taken by the employers?**

The Principal explained that proposals to reform the University of Dundee Superannuation Scheme (UoDSS) had been discussed and approved by University Court in 2021 and then amended following consultation in 2022.

The Principal explained that Court had decided to preserve Defined-Benefits as an option for existing members but that the Scheme would become a Defined Contribution scheme for all new members and any existing members who chose to join the DC scheme. This current proposal was open now to consultation with the affected staff.

The Principal noted that a DC scheme lowered affordability barriers that might prevent staff from accessing the pension scheme.

The University Secretary reported that after Court approval in February 2022 there had been ten staff consultation meetings arranged, including on-line meetings and information meetings where the University's Pensions advisers (Mercers) were available to answer questions from staff.

The University Secretary noted that the sessions were arranged to allow staff to provide feedback on the proposals and an opportunity for the University Executive Group to listen and respond to staff concerns. The Secretary also noted that as some staff were taking strike action during the

consultation period it was decided to extend consultations and arrange additional meetings for staff.

The University Secretary said that many staff attending the sessions were concerned that they would have to pay more and receive reduced benefits under the proposals. He acknowledged that given the scale of the Scheme's deficit such an outcome was inevitable.

The University Secretary noted that some staff concerns raised at the meetings had been founded on misunderstanding. He emphasised that existing UoDSS scheme members would continue to be able to remain in a defined benefits scheme and would not be required to move to a Defined-Contribution scheme. All benefits accrued in UoDSS up until the point the proposed changes came into operation on 1 January 2023 would be preserved and protected under the current scheme rules, which included a normal retirement age of 65. Under the proposals, pension accrued from 1 January 2023 would be linked to a normal retirement age of 68, but staff could still choose to retire at 65 albeit with some actuarial reduction to that part of their total pension associated with service after 1 January 2023. He also noted that some staff attending the meetings had welcomed the new Defined Contribution proposals as providing a more affordable and flexible pension scheme option for new members of staff and existing staff who so wished.

The University Secretary outlined ways that staff could provide feedback during the extended consultation period, including additional meetings, a dedicated email in-box that was reviewed on a weekly basis, through their union representatives or by contacting the University directly. He noted that the consultation period would end on 24 June 2022 and that University Court would be expected to discuss the outcome at its meeting in late August 2022.

The Principal emphasised that the consultation exercise was genuine and urged staff to engage with the process and to provide feedback on the proposals.

### **UCU Assessment Boycott**

On the issue of the University & College Union's industrial action the Principal noted that the dispute was over "four fights". On pay, he explained that the Universities & Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) had decided to propose higher pay rises for the lowest paid staff, acknowledging that the cost of living disproportionately affected those on lower incomes.

On the questions of strike action impacting student assessment and completion, the Vice-Principal (Education) confirmed that a full risk assessment was underway to help minimise the impact of disruption on students.

The Vice-Principal reported that Dundee University & College Union (DUCU) had decided to take action short of a strike, in the form of an assessment and marking boycott, from 23 May 2022. He noted that students had faced considerable challenges over the previous two years and expressed a hope that negative impacts of strike action could be avoided. He confirmed that appropriate mitigations would be put in place to ensure that Examination Boards would meet and decide on student outcomes. He explained that further advice could be obtained from him or the Director of Quality & Academic Standards.

### **USS Valuation**

The Interim Director of Finance confirmed that the most recent assessment of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) had reported an improved position compared with the formal

valuation that took place in 2020. He warned that the latest assessment was indicative only and that action could only follow from a formal actuarial valuation.

The Interim Director explained that the current assessment was able to consider recent market conditions. He noted that if the actuarial valuation planned for March 2023 confirmed this improved position the USS trustees might have an opportunity to recommend changing contributions or benefits accordingly. He noted that such recommendations would need to be approved by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC).

The Principal emphasised that the changes to USS that took effect in April 2022 were necessary to avoid triggering a mechanism to increase contribution rates. He noted that any improvements to the scheme's valuation could only be considered after the March 2023 valuation, taking into account how the April 2022 changes have bedded in.

The Principal noted that the University was just one of over 300 member institutions who would need to consider their options after due consultation with their staff after the next formal valuation.

He expressed a hope that the recent changes to the scheme would enable a range of options to be considered to help make the scheme more stable in the longer term.

### **Staff Survey**

**Will the Principal provide an update on plans for the next comprehensive Staff Survey? While focussed pulse surveys can be useful it is important that a full survey is carried out to provide longitudinal data. Will the University commit to hold a full survey in the next academic year?**

The Deputy Director of Human Resources explained that the University had been running staff pulse surveys as part of an ongoing commitment to staff engagement. The Deputy Director reported that plans for a Staff Survey following the previously agreed cycle had been complicated by the withdrawal of the external partner from the market.

The Deputy Director confirmed that a full Staff Survey would be planned for 2023-24 as part of the University Strategy implementation and would be confirmed after a new external partner had been identified.

The Senior Vice-Principal explained that a regular Staff Survey was an important part of a coordinated approach to implementing the University's People and Talent Strategy. He noted the intention to promote an active listening culture, to listen to staff feedback on areas for improvement and identifying good practices. He emphasised the need to recognise that effective communication required input from across the University and in all directions. He confirmed plans for a full Staff Survey every two years from 2023-24 onwards.

The Principal took the opportunity to thank the Interim Director of Human Resources who was leaving the University at the end of May 2022.

### **International and European Students**

**The very significant increase in international student numbers while welcome has caused some challenges for the University. Will this increase be sustained in the longer-term? Also, the number of EU students in the University has fallen sharply since Brexit. What can the University do to attract more European students?**

The Principal welcomed the significant increase in the number of international students in the University and thanked staff involved in international recruitment efforts. He noted that the increase in numbers had created some challenges but also provided significant opportunities especially in relation to securing financial sustainability and advancing the internationalisation agenda.

On the issue of engagement with the European higher education sector post-Brexit, the Principal reflected on the challenges caused by the position of the UK Government and the need to make clear the benefits of associating with Horizon Europe. The Principal emphasised the importance of continued third-party collaboration and engagement with the wider European sector.

The Vice-Principal (International) reflected on the difficulties of attracting EU students to study in Scotland given the significant increase in tuition fees post-Brexit. The Vice-Principal reported on efforts to introduce a new UoD European Scholarship, build on previous Erasmus collaborations for the new Turing student mobility scheme and create new European partnerships by drawing on the University's reputation for academic excellence at an international level.

The Vice-Principal also reflected on the changes to the mix of international students in the University, noting a move away from a eurocentric demographic to a truly global community. The Vice-Principal noted the benefits of the changes while acknowledging the challenges of ensuring that students from all parts of the world have the right specialist support, preparation and set of academic skills needed to meet the University's high expectations of its students.

The Vice-Principal explained that a new Humanitarian Oversight Board had been established to help manage increased activity in awarding humanitarian scholarships and develop the application to become a University of Sanctuary. The Vice-Principal reported that 25 awards had been made to Afghani students in 2021 and that up to 40 awards would be made to students displaced due to the war in Ukraine. The Vice-Principal noted that online provision for Ukrainian medical students was in development.

#### **Additional Questions on Pensions and Pay**

A member of Staff Council argued that there was historical evidence that the UoDSS had been failing for many years. The Principal was asked if this failure was the fault of the University or the Scheme's Trustees, and if the Scheme should consider replacing the Trustees.

A member of Staff Council argued that younger members of staff would be affected the most by changes to pensions and asked the Principal to consider alternatives and address the issue of low pay as the main cause of the problem with pensions.

A member of Staff Council argued that given the current high rate of inflation a pay settlement of 9% per annum for the lowest paid staff would mean a real terms pay cut and asked the Principal to outline plans to address the issue.

The Principal acknowledged the current high rate of inflation and the effect this would have on pay awards. He emphasised that the University had been in deficit for many years and action was required to address this and deliver a more sustainable financial position despite the challenges of the wider economy.

The Principal emphasised that the current proposals for reform of the UoDSS were as generous as possible and provided the best available solutions in the current context. He noted this view was shared by the University's governing body and the University Executive Group.

The Principal noted that the proposed pay award was a matter of national-level negotiation and that the highest increases would be aimed at the lowest paid. He acknowledged the current rate of inflation in the UK. He also acknowledged the reality of cuts in public funding to the University through the Scottish Funding Council's decision, effectively to reduce the unit of resource in the main teaching grant and to implement changes to the Research Excellence Grant.

The University Secretary urged staff to consider attending one of the open meetings with the University's pensions advisers who could provide an expert view on the issues raised.

The University Secretary explained that there had been a general move away from final-salary and defined-benefit schemes in UK pensions due to high costs and inherent risks and vulnerabilities. He noted that the University was committed to paying the Living Wage and was seeking accreditation as a Living Wage employer.

The University Secretary noted that current members of the UoDSS were required to pay 8% of salary into the Scheme. He explained that the proposed new entry-level would be set as 5% or as low as 2% depending on the choice of the individual staff member. He noted that this would provide a more affordable and flexible scheme. He confirmed that the employer contribution would remain at 10% of salary under the proposals.

A member of Staff Council argued that the pension scheme was healthy, that there was no justification for the cuts and that the valuation had been carried out at a time designed to give the required outcome.

The Convener of the Staff Council Standing Committee called the session to a close as the meeting had already run over the advertised end time by 10 minutes.

## 2. NEXT MEETING

### Special Meeting

Due to technical issues caused by the loss of wifi access in the venue, sound quality was poor and sound was lost for a total of 2-3 minutes of the meeting. Q&A moderation and camera for remote presenter functions were also inoperable during the meeting.

Given the technical problems the Principal and the Convener of the Staff Council Standing Committee decided to schedule an additional meeting of Staff Council by the end of June 2022.

### Next Regular Meeting

Tuesday 22 November 2022 at 1.05pm Location TBA

**Professor Iain Gillespie**  
Principal  
May 2022