

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

UNIVERSITY COURT

An additional meeting of the University Court was held at 1.20pm on 10 December 2024 in the UEG Meeting Room, Tower Building, City Campus.

Present: Amanda Millar (Chair);
Glenn Allison;
Alan Bainbridge (online);
Tricia Bey;
Manaswi Budhathoki;
Carolina Castro;
Greg Colgan;
Claire Cunningham;
Professor Kim Dale (online);
Regius Professor Sir Mike Ferguson (online);
Marcus Flucker (online);
Andrew Lothian (online);
Dr Ian Mair (online);
Claire Martin;
Professor Linda Martindale;
Ron Mobed (online);
Dr Anna Notaro;
Carla Rossini (online);
Amina Shah;
Karthik Subramanya (online);
Jay Surti (online); and
Sharon Sweeney.

In Attendance: Dr Neale Laker (Deputy University Secretary);
Dr Jim McGeorge (University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer); and
Dr Alison Ramsay (Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance))

Apologies: Garry Taylor.

36. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF COURT

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

37. RESIGNATION OF THE PRINCIPAL

The Court formally noted the resignation of the Principal, Professor Iain Gillespie, on 6 December 2024.

The Court decided: to note the resignation of Professor Iain Gillespie.

38. INTERIM PRINCIPAL & VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Chair of Court apprised members of developments since the meeting of the Court on 12 November 2024. An Advisory Group, led by the convenor of the Finance & Policy Committee (F&PC) and the convenor of the Audit & Risk Committee (A&RC) had been established to support the UEG and had met twice. The Chair, working with this Group and Senior Officers of the University, had been focused on institutional resilience, both before and after the resignation of Professor Gillespie.

The Chair advised members that she was seeking the authority from the Court to appoint the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost as interim Principal on an ongoing basis. This appointment was intended to provide continuity at this time.

Members sought to understand the situation that had arisen since the meeting of the Court. Members noted that the priority at this time was ensuring the stability of the University under the interim leadership of Professor O'Neill and the rest of the UEG with the support of the Court. Members were advised that contractual matters relating to Professor O'Neill's appointment as interim Principal would be fully discussed by the Remuneration Committee in due course.

The Court decided: to approve the appointment of Professor Shane O'Neill as the University's Interim Principal & Vice-Chancellor with immediate effect.

39. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

The Chair of Court sought the approval of the Court to convene an emergency committee under the terms of the Court Resilience Plan. The Terms of Reference for this committee were in development but would be circulated, once finalised. Members sought clarification of the composition of the committee and its decision-making powers, noting that the Court Resilience Plan proposed the inclusion of a staff member and a student member of the Court in its composition. The Chair advised members that the Terms of Reference would make the membership and decision-making powers of the emergency committee explicit but it was intended that the committee would work in support of the Interim Principal and the UEG in the development and delivery of a financial recovery plan to be presented to the University's bankers, external auditors and to the Scottish Funding Council. The establishment of the committee did not dispense with the requirement to call additional meetings of the Court and members were advised that the committee would not seek to take decisions which may not be consistent with those likely to be taken by the Court as a whole.

Members sought assurances as to how decisions taken by the committee would be communicated to the Court and the likely timescale for these communications. Members were advised that any such decisions would likely be transmitted quickly but were reminded that the committee would call additional meetings of the Court, where necessary, for discussions of matters requiring wider debate.

The Court noted that the UEG was in communication with the University's external and internal auditors, the SFC and the University's bankers in the development of the recovery plan and that it was very likely that a review of systems and controls would be planned as a priority once the recovery plan had been agreed. Members were advised that external expertise would be sought to support this work.

In discussion, Court was apprised of significant levels of anxiety amongst staff and students. While colleagues were supporting one another within individual Schools and Directorates there remained significant anger towards the University leadership and there was a desire for more information to be released to staff. Members noted that proactive and supportive communication was important if UEG were to reduce the level of staff and student disquiet. The Court reiterated its collective responsibility for the wellbeing of staff and students and noted that support would be required for all staff facing the difficult discussions and decisions likely to arise in the months ahead. Thereafter, the Court approved the establishment of an emergency committee under the terms of the Court Resilience Plan.

The Chair thanked members for their engagement and input.

The Court decided: to agree the establishment of an emergency committee under paragraph 13 of the Court Resilience Plan.

40. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was declared.

41. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as 25 February 2025.

Amanda Millar
Chair of Court
University of Dundee