

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

UNIVERSITY COURT

A meeting of the University Court was held at 9.00am on 29 April 2025 *via* Microsoft Teams.

Present: Tricia Bey (Acting Chair);
Alan Bainbridge;
Manaswi Budhathoki;
Carolina Castro;
Greg Colgan;
Regius Professor Sir Mike Ferguson;
Marcus Flucker;
Dr Ian Mair;
Claire Martin;
Professor Linda Martindale;
Ron Mobed;
Dr Andrea Mohan;
Dr Anna Notaro;
Professor Shane O’Neill (Interim Vice-Chancellor);
Amina Shah (items 135-142);
Karthik Subramanya
Jay Surti; and
Professor Garry Taylor

In Attendance: Elise Gallagher (Director of People);
Roddy Isles (Head of Corporate Communication);
Dr Neale Laker (Acting University Secretary);
Richard Maconachie (SFC)(*qua* observer);
Lizzi Nicoll (Interim Director of External Relations);
Dr Alison Ramsay (Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance));
Helen Simpson (Interim Director of Finance); and
Louise Soutar

Apologies: Andrew Lothian, Carla Rossini and Sharon Sweeney

135. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE ACTING CHAIR OF COURT

The Acting Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for attending. In particular, Ms Bey welcomed Dr Andrea Mohan to her first meeting as a member of Court elected by Senate.

136. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair invited members to declare if they had, or could be perceived to have, any conflicts of interest in relation to any items on the agenda, beyond those already declared. Thereafter, no new conflicts were declared.

137. **MINUTES**

The Court decided: to approve the minutes of the meeting on 8 April 2025.

138. **MATTERS ARISING**

Action Log

Court received and considered the action log summarising progress in relation to outstanding actions from previous meetings. Members were advised that there were no items on the action log not already on the agenda or which were not yet due.

Resolved: to note the Action Log

139. **ACTING CHAIR'S REPORT TO COURT**

The Acting Chair apprised the Court of her activities at a University and sectoral level since the previous meeting. Ms Bey advised members that work was underway to appoint the next Chairperson of Court and that the Court Appointing Committee had met on 11 April 2025. The Committee had decided to consult as widely as possible across all stakeholder groups to seek opinions on the attributes, skills and qualities required in the next Chairperson and Ms Bey had already attended meetings with the Deans of School and the Service Directors to invite comments. Court members would be included in the consultation and members noted that the Acting University Secretary would be circulating a call for input by email. The second meeting of the Appointing Committee was scheduled to take place later in the week to consider the timeline for the recruitment and selection process.

Members were advised that the first Town Hall meeting of the SFC independent investigation into the University's position would also take place later in the week. Professor Pamela Gillies, leading the investigation, would attend with key associates from BDO, the organisation appointed to conduct the investigation in order to answer early questions from staff and students.

Resolved: to note the report

140. **INTERIM PRINCIPAL & VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO COURT**

The Interim Principal & Vice-Chancellor apprised the Court of their activities at a University and sectoral level since the previous meeting and noted that UEG members would not be present at the Town Hall meeting on 1 May. This had been agreed with Professor Gillies in order that staff should not feel constrained in the questions they wished to raise. Members noted that the timescales for the investigation were short and that the Secretariat would supply much of the material requested through the nominated Executive Assistant.

Court was advised that the first meeting of the Task Force appointed by the Scottish Government and led by Sir Alan Langlands, former Principal & Vice-Chancellor of the University, had been held. Professor O'Neill, Dr David McBeth and the DUSA President had attended, along with representatives of the campus trade unions and local partners.

Court requested clarification of the remit and responsibilities of the Task Force and was advised that this had been the subject of some debate at the meeting but that the group was not a decision-making body. Members noted that the Task Force was intended to act as an advisory group of local and national partners and stakeholders to focus on the University's place in, and contribution to, the local and national economy. In discussion, members sought assurances that decisions taken by the Court would not be subject to the ratification of the Task Force and were advised that it had no decision-making powers in that regard. Rather the group would offer advice on identifying and maximising opportunities for joint working as the University emerged from its present position. The SFC Director of Finance apprised Court that membership of the Task Force was at the invitation of the Cabinet Minister and that this could evolve over time. The Acting Chair reported that she had not been contacted, either by Sir Alan Langlands or by Professor Gillies.

Professor O'Neill noted developments in enhancing leadership capacity within the University and advised Court that internal candidates would be identified to fill the role of Vice-Principal (Education). The portfolio of the Vice-Principal (Research) would be re-integrated with certain responsibilities currently within the purview of the Vice-Principal (Enterprise and Economic Transformation). As the University intended to implement a Voluntary Severance (VS) scheme the Director of Human Resources from the University of Edinburgh, James Saville, would be supporting the People Directorate on a part-time basis. Finally, a proposal to recruit a former Principal & Vice-Chancellor to act as Provost would be considered by the Remuneration Committee at its meeting on 8 May 2025.

Resolved: to note the report.

[Secretary's note – the Membership and the Terms of Reference for the Task Force were circulated to members following the meeting]

141. **RESERVED BUSINESS: FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN: PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL**

The University claims exemption under Section 30 (b) and Section 33 (1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Members are therefore required to treat the discussion and associated papers as strictly confidential and exempt from public disclosure. The status of this item will be reviewed at regular intervals and will be released when the exemptions are deemed to no longer apply, and following the approval of the Chair of Court.

142. **RESERVED BUSINESS: PERIOD 8 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The University claims exemption under Section 30 (b) and Section 33 (1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Members are therefore required to treat the discussion and associated papers as strictly confidential and exempt from public disclosure. The status of this item will be reviewed at regular intervals and will be released when the exemptions are deemed to no longer apply, and following the approval of the Chair of Court.

143. **RESERVED BUSINESS: REPORT ON VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE PROPOSALS**

The University claims exemption under Section 30 (b) and Section 33 (1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Members are therefore required to treat the discussion and associated papers as strictly confidential and exempt from public disclosure. The status of this item will be reviewed at regular intervals and will be released when the exemptions

are deemed to no longer apply, and following the approval of the Chair of Court.

144. **RESERVED BUSINESS: UPDATE ON CASH POSITION**

The University claims exemption under Section 30 (b) and Section 33 (1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Members are therefore required to treat the discussion and associated papers as strictly confidential and exempt from public disclosure. The status of this item will be reviewed at regular intervals and will be released when the exemptions are deemed to no longer apply, and following the approval of the Chair of Court.

145. **RESERVED BUSINESS: UPDATE ON FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The University claims exemption under Section 30 (b) and Section 33 (1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Members are therefore required to treat the discussion and associated papers as strictly confidential and exempt from public disclosure. The status of this item will be reviewed at regular intervals and will be released when the exemptions are deemed to no longer apply, and following the approval of the Chair of Court.

Resolved: to note the report.

146. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was declared.

147. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as Tuesday 13 May at 9am, online.

Tricia Bey
Acting Chair of Court
University of Dundee