

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

UNIVERSITY COURT

A meeting of the University Court was held at 9.00am on 8 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 Anna Notaro;
Professor Shane O'Neill (Interim Vice-Chancellor);
Jay Surti; and
Professor Garry Taylor

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

Apologies: Glenn Allison, Greg Colgan, Elise Gallagher, Carla Rossini, Amina Shah, Karthik Subramanya and Sharon Sweeney

107. 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 Peter Ward from SFC, who was attending as an observer.

108. 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.

109. **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

110. **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.

111. **UPDATE ON RECOVERY PLAN**

The Interim Principal & Vice-Chancellor apprised Court of recent events in the development of the University's recovery plan. Professor O'Neill advised members that he had attended a meeting of University Principals in Scotland organized by Universities Scotland and that the discussion had focused solely on the University of Dundee and the possible implications for the sector as a whole from the level of ministerial scrutiny being experienced.

Court was advised that the UEG was meeting three times per week and that leadership roles would be reviewed following the announcement of the departure of the Vice-Principal (Research) and the decision of the Vice-Principal (Education) to retire. Members were reminded that, in the interim, Professor O'Neill was receiving support and advice from Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli, Sir Paul Grice and Professor Andrea Nolan and that the University Secretary at Robert Gordon University (RGU) was working with the Acting Secretary two days per week.

Members noted that the campus trade unions had submitted counter-proposals to the Financial Recovery Plan (FRP), which had been scrutinized by PWC at the request of UEG. Meetings held to discuss PWC's analysis of the proposals had been challenging but had led to more open dialogue. The continued media attention was noted as having a negative impact on the University's ability to control its narrative, which members would discuss as a substantive agenda item under paragraph 112. The Interim Principal & Vice-Chancellor informed Court that the announcement of a 'Task Force' appointed by Ministers from the Scottish Parliament was to be welcomed but reminded members that Court remained the governing body and that UEG remained the locus of managerial activity.

In discussion Court noted that, whilst the involvement of these senior figures was a positive development, the uncertainty for staff potentially at risk of redundancy would be prolonged. Professor O'Neill reminded members that the consultation process had been paused in response to requests from the campus trade unions and that the possible emergence of an alternative recovery plan with potentially fewer losses would be a positive development. Court noted that staff remained unhappy with the continued uncertainty and that mistrust of UEG was widespread. Members were advised that management was keen to develop more open channels of communication, both internally and externally, and that the Interim Director of

External Relations was in attendance to delineate the proposed strategy.

Resolved: to note report.

112. **RESERVED BUSINESS: REPUTATIONAL RECOVERY PLAN**

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.

113. **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.

114. **RESERVED BUSINESS: LETTER TO SFC**

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.

115. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Court members requested an update on developments in the University's engagement with TRIBAL over the ongoing issues with the implementation of Blueprint. It was agreed that the Interim Vice-Principal (International) would present a brief summary report to the next meeting of the Court.

Thereafter, no other business was declared.

116. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as Tuesday 15 April at 10am in the Leverhulme Research Institute, Ewing Building. The Chair reminded members that UEG Officers would be invited to attend the meeting.

Tricia Bey
Acting Chair of Court
University of Dundee