GRADUATES’ COUNCIL
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Committee was held on 21 April 2012.

Chair: Dr J McGeorge, University Secretary

Present: 23

In Attendance: Director of External Relations; Mrs B Boyle; Ms J Noble; and Policy Officer (Corporate Governance)

Apologies: Principal Professor CP Downes; Mr B Cairns; Mr D Gauld; Mr A Grant; Mr E Sanderson; Ms V White;

1. MINUTES

The Graduates’ Council decided: to approve the minutes of the meeting on 2 April 2011.

2. PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Due to unforeseen circumstances the Principal was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting. In his absence, the University Secretary welcomed members of the Graduates’ Council to the annual meeting, highlighting the importance with which the on-going interest of graduates was held. The Principal’s annual report to the Graduates’ Council had been circulated to attending members of the Council (Appendix1), and the University Secretary highlighted key areas of the report.

The University Secretary highlighted the challenges presented in the Government white paper on post-16 education (‘Putting Learners at the Centre’), the Higher Education funding landscape, and work on a new University Vision and Strategy which would be launched in Autumn 2012. He also provided a review of the University’s financial position, planned investments and key capital projects, noting that the University aimed to build upon its current financial platform to ensure future stability. It was noted that the University continued to fair well in student surveys, and that the University continued to look to enhance Learning and Teaching standards at the University through the recruitment, reward and retention of key staff. With regard to Research, the University Secretary highlighted preparations for the upcoming Research Excellence Framework (2014), and a further increase in research funding awards. The University was looking to increase collaborations with industry and explore further opportunities to exploiting research for commercial purposes.

In concluding the report, the University Secretary gave thanks to members of the Graduates’ Council Business Committee for their endeavours throughout the last 12 months. He noted in particular that Mrs Barbara Boyle was stepping down from servicing the Graduates’ Council and Business Committee, and that Mr Martin Nimmo, Dr Frank Zwolinski, and Mr Willie Wilson were to leave the Graduates’ Council Business Committee having reached the end of their terms-of-office. The
importance of the role of the Graduates’ Council Assessors on Court in representing the Graduates’ Council at Court was also highlighted.

**The Graduates’ Council decided:** to note the report

### 3. ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Copies of the audited accounts for 2010-11 were available

**The Graduates’ Council decided:** to note the accounts

### 4. BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Printed copies of the Convener’s report (Appendix 2) were circulated to members attending the annual meeting. Before discussing the report, the Convener reminded members that he would be stepping down from the role of Convener at the end of the annual meeting, at which time Mr Keith Winter would assume this role. He gave thanks to Mr Charles Lovatt for his support as Vice-Convener and to Mrs Barbara Boyle who had serviced the committee during this time, commenting that the efforts of both had been greatly valued.

The Convener highlighted that the term-of-office of Dr Frank Zwolinski on the Graduates’ Council Business Committee had come to an end. Dr Zwolinski had been a particularly active member of the Committee for many years, and the Convener thanked him for all of his hard work. He also informed the Graduates’ Council that Mr Martin Nimmo had been unable to accept an offer to renew his co-option to the Graduates’ Council Business Committee, as such Mr Nimmo was also stepping down and the Convener thanked him for his efforts.

The Convener was pleased to announce that Dr Jim Smith had accepted an offer to renew his co-option to the Graduates’ Council Business Committee. Dr Smith had been instrumental in the redevelopment of the application form and process for applications to the Graduates’ Council Fund.

In providing his annual report, the convener highlighted the activities of members of the Business Committee and the Assessors on Court. He also expressed disappointment in the low level of interest and the standard of applications to the Graduates’ Council Fund.

**The Graduates’ Council decided:**

(i) to note the thanks of the Convener to Mr Charles Lovatt, Mrs Barbara Boyle, Dr Frank Zwolinski and Mr Martin Nimmo;

(ii) to note the renewal of the co-option of Dr Jim Smith to the Graduates’ Council Business Committee; and

(iii) otherwise to note the report
5. **GRADUATES’ COUNCIL ASSESSORS ON COURT**

A report was provided by Emerius Professor Ann Burchell as one of the two Graduates’ Council Assessors on Court (Appendix 3). Emerius Professor Burchell confirmed that the Assessors were keen to represent graduates through their activities on Court and the Committees of Court – with the Assessors also being members of the Finance & Policy, Audit, and Governance & Nominations Committees. She went on to outline the role of the Assessors on Court, and other activities that had been undertaken by the Assessors in support of the University.

The Assessors also commented upon the report from the Principal, noting that University Officers had balanced risk and development against a difficult economic climate, and that the University of Dundee was now in a good position thanks to the hard work and foresight of Officers.

The Convener intimated that the term-of-office of Emerius Professor Ann Burchell as one of the Councils’ Assessors on Court would expire on 31 July 2013. Applications, accompanied by a CV and supporting statement were to be sent to Dr Neale Laker by 30 September 2012. An Election to fill the vacancy would be held in accordance with the regulations, and the successful candidate would be announced at the 2013 Annual Meeting.

**The Graduates’ Council decided:**

(i) to note the 2013 election for Graduates’ Council Assessor on Court

(ii) to otherwise note the report

6. **GRADUATES’ COUNCIL FUND**

The Convener of the Board of Directors reported that there was a total of £5,439 available for disbursements from the Fund. Over the last year, three requests for funding had been received, however all applications failed to meet the criteria set out. As such no awards had been made. The Convener highlighted that all applications must demonstrate a benefit to the University, and that the Board of Directors had aimed to distribute up to three awards of £500 each per year.

**The Graduates’ Council decided:** to note the report

7. **MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATES’ COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

It was confirmed that Mr Keith Winter had been elected as the Convener of the Graduates’ Council Business Committee from the date of the Annual Meeting 2012, for a period of one year in the first instance.

It was confirmed that the period of office of Mr Martin Nimmo and Dr Jim Smith as co-opted members of the Graduates’ Council Business Committee had expired. Mr Nimmo was unavailable in the immediate term and so had stepped down from the Committee. Dr Smith had agreed to co-option for a further period of two years. The Convener confirmed that the Graduates’ Council Business Committee would discuss
the vacant position for a further co-opted member of the Committee at the next meeting of the Committee on 19 May 2012.

It was noted that Dr Frank Zwolinski’s term-of-office on the Graduates’ Council Business Committee had expired. As such, nominations for candidates to fill two vacancies for the normal four-year period were invited. Five nominations were received in advance:

Mr Stanley Appiah (MSc 2011 International Oil & Gas Management);
Ms Sarah McMichael (BSc (Hons) Interactive Media Design 2009);
Mr Peter Noad (BSc(Hons) 1983 Town & Regional Planning);
Mr Jason Norris (BSc (Hons) 1999 Microbiology); and
Mr Samuel Sturrock (LLB (Hons) 2002 & LLM Scots Law 2003).

A further nomination was received verbally at the start of the meeting:

Mr Steven Blane (LLB (Hons) 2005 & DIP LP 2008), proposed by Mr Keith Winter and Seconded by Mr Willie Wilson.

46 votes were returned as follows: Mr Stanley Appiah 2 votes, Ms Sarah McMichael 17 votes, Mr Peter Noad 7 votes, Mr Jason Norris 4 votes, Mr Samuel Sturrock 4 votes, Mr Steven Blane 12 votes. There were no spoilt voting papers. As a result, Mr Steven Blane and Ms Sarah McMichael were duly elected to serve for a period of four years until the Annual Meeting 2016.

The Graduates’ Council decided: (i) to note the election of Mr Winter as Business Committee Convener;

(ii) to note the expiry of the term of office of Mr Nimmo, and the renewal of the co-option of Dr Smith; and

(iii) to note the expiry of the term of office of Dr Zwolinski, and the election of Mr Blane and Ms McMichael to the Business Committee

8. HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

It was proposed and seconded that Mr Charles Lovatt continue as the Graduates’ Council representative on the Honorary Degrees Committee. Mr Lovatt accepted the invitation, and asked members of the Graduates’ Council to contact him with suggestions.

The Graduates’ Council decided: to note the continuation of Mr Lovatt as Graduates’ Council representative on the Honorary Degrees Committee
9. CHANGES TO CHARTER, STATUTE (20), ORDINANCE (20) AND REGULATIONS

A paper outlining proposed changes to the Charter (11.1), Statute 20 (Graduates’ Council), Ordinance 20 (Graduates’ Council) and Regulations pertaining to the Graduates’ Council was presented (Appendix 4). The proposed changes had been initiated by the Graduates’ Council Business Committee to bring the Council into line with the requirements of its evolving role. The proposal to change the name of the Graduates’ Council to ‘Graduates’ Association’ was noted to reflect a desire to make the Graduates’ Council more graduate focussed, and to better reflect activities. Other notable changes included a move to ensure that candidates for the role of Assessor on Court were better informed, and to bring terms-of–office into line with those of Court. The proposal was unanimously recommended by the Graduates’ Council Business Committee, and had been considered by the Governance & Nominations Committee, University Court, and University Senate.

The Convener asked that it be noted that the changes proposed did not equate to a reconstitution of the Graduates’ Council, and that it was expected that all members would continue in their roles on the Committee. He also confirmed that the terms of office that would apply to members of the Committee would be those which were in place at the time of their election.

The Convener noted that the concerns of one member of the Graduates’ Council relating to the proposed changes had been received for communication at the annual meeting. The Business Committee had carefully considered the communication and noted the objections raised. Members of the Graduates’ Council present at the annual meeting also noted these concerns.

A motion to consider the proposal was proposed by Mr Keith Winter and seconded by Mr Charles Lovatt.

The Graduates’ Council decided: to unanimously approve the proposal with no amendments.
Welcome

Welcome to this year’s Graduates’ Council Meeting. It has been a year of transitions. We began 2011 with a minority, SNP-led Scottish Government and, courtesy of the Scottish General Election on 5 May 2011, have seen the Nationalists returned with a historic overall majority setting a new context for Scottish Higher Education. The new government's agenda for post-16 education was quickly set out in its White Paper, ‘Putting Learners at the Centre’ published towards the end of last year. This poses a number of challenges for the sector including: widening access to HE; improving the efficiency and flexibility of learner journeys across the landscape of schools, colleges of further education and universities; enhancing the impact of universities on the Scottish economy, culture and social development; and improving transparency and accountability in our systems of governance.

Meanwhile, the increase in tuition fees elsewhere in the UK, coupled with the SNP’s commitment to free university places for Scottish domiciled students and cuts in public spending, threatened to open up a large funding gap that would weaken the competitiveness of Scottish Universities. Following a successful campaign by Universities Scotland, however, the Government has shown its commitment to HE with a funding settlement announced in the Spending Review that is comparatively generous and will add 6% in real terms to the main teaching grant maintained over the next three years. We are also now able to charge students coming to Scottish universities from elsewhere in the UK tuition fees of up to £9000 a year, creating new opportunities for income growth. Despite this funding turbulence north and south of the border, applications to study at the University of Dundee in the next academic session remain buoyant.

It is also a year of transition within the University. The improving financial position coupled with the success of the strategic review initiative means we are emerging from a period of austerity and cost cutting into one where we can now invest selectively in our strengths. This agenda comes with its own challenges to ensure our investments pay off by enhancing our academic reputation still further and securing financial sustainability into the future. In support of this new era we will be launching a new University Strategy in the autumn. Above all I want our strategy to be ambitious and inspirational for all past, present and future staff and students.

Finance

The University continued to improve its financial position throughout 2010/11. Given the difficult funding environment the surplus for 2010/11 was less significant than had been achieved in the previous year, however helped by the implementation of the Strategic Review, the result was an operating surplus of £5.6m (leaving out £3.8m voluntary severance costs and endowment adjustments) - some £1.5m better than 2009-10.

This is a good result for the University and puts us in a strong position to deal with the future funding uncertainties that are inevitably coming our way. The better than expected settlement from the Scottish Government for 2012/13 will reduce these difficulties to an extent, but the impact, for instance, of increased fees in England and of the introduction of fees in Scotland for students from the rest of the UK (RUK) is difficult to predict and creates significant uncertainty in the system.

The summarised results of our financial performance for 2010/11 are shown in the following table:
Appendix 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10/11 £m</th>
<th>09/10 £m</th>
<th>08/09 £m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>229.2</td>
<td>219.1</td>
<td>207.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff costs</strong></td>
<td>(130.3)</td>
<td>(129.2)</td>
<td>(122.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other operating expenses and depreciation</strong></td>
<td>(93.3)</td>
<td>(84.9)</td>
<td>(83.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Endowments</strong></td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating result</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(before interest and finance costs)</em></td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest and finance costs</strong></td>
<td>(0.8)</td>
<td>(1.1)</td>
<td>(1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating result</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(after interest and finance costs)</em></td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restructuring costs / exceptional costs</strong></td>
<td>(3.8)</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
<td>(1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gain on disposal</strong></td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Associate</strong></td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
<td>(0.6)</td>
<td>(0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surplus for the year</strong></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income increased by 5% in the year to £229m. Grants received from the Scottish Funding Council funding (SFC) continued to fall as a percentage of total income and now represent 36% of total income.

Tuition fees and education contracts rose more slowly than the previous year, with non-EU fees rising by £1m. The proportion of our income generated by non-EU fees (and especially international student recruitment) remains relatively low compared with comparator institutions in the sector, at just over 6% of our total income. The University continues to target further growth in this area, although these efforts are being significantly hampered by difficulties experienced by students in relation to visa regulations and to some extent by the University’s subject mix.

Research income continued to out-perform the strategic target, with 13% growth. Performance on grants from Research Councils was particularly strong, with 29% growth seeing this funding category overtaking UK charities. However, the value of research grants awarded during 2010/11 fell significantly, in contrast to previous year-on-year growth. This was largely due to the challenges faced by research councils and other funders as a result of the current economic climate, and we expect to see this reflected in the operating result in future years.

The cash expenditure on fixed assets was £16m, a decrease of £3m on the previous year - reflecting decisions made during the year on a revised capital programme. Within a context of restricted capital funding, the University has chosen to focus primarily on maintaining existing buildings to the highest possible standard.

The net cash inflow from operating activities in 2010/11 was £14.4m, compared to the previous year of £7.6m. The operating cash inflow strengthened the University’s cash position, with net funds increasing significantly from £16.6m to £29.3m.

The financial performance for the year was a good result and puts the University in a strong position as it enters a difficult year and future funding uncertainty. This performance reflects the hard work of staff across the University in increasing income and managing costs and has been supported by enhanced financial controls and reporting arrangements.

**Current & Future Years:**

There remain significant uncertainties around the economy and public funding, as well as significant cost pressures which once again make for a challenging future for the University and the Higher Education sector as a whole. Taken in the context of reductions in SFC
funding, the forecast of a 2011/12 bottom-line surplus similar to that of 2010/11 represents a formidable achievement on the part of Schools, Colleges and Service Directorates. It also highlights the importance of the Strategic Review, and especially staff cost reductions gained through the Voluntary Severance Scheme. The forecast for the current year after projected Voluntary Severance costs and a gain on disposals is a bottom line surplus of £2.8m. While this represents a credible position given the reduced SFC income, it is still a good deal short of the ideal 3-5% sustainable operating surplus required to ensure the University’s ability to invest in infrastructure and strategic priorities in the future.

Looking ahead, the reduction in SFC funding seen in 2011/12 will, in broad terms, be largely reversed for 2012/13, and although the Scottish Government settlement for the Higher Education sector was more generous than had been expected, capital funding has once again been hard-hit. When combined with Strategic Review savings, there is once again the opportunity to rebuild the financial surplus towards the 3-5% target, and to invest in key areas. It is worth noting however that the impact of the increased fees in England, and the introduction of fees in Scotland for students from the rest of the UK (RUK) remains difficult to assess fully, and while initial recruitment levels are within modelled ranges the funding landscape will not be known until later in the year.

Campus Development

Despite the difficult financial environment insofar as capital funding is concerned, the University has over the last year continued to invest in a number of capital projects which will support future growth and continue to enhance our reputation.

- **Life Sciences: Centre for Translational and Interdisciplinary Research (CTIR):** The construction of the new CTIR building to expand the existing Life Sciences complex is expected to start in May 2012. With the current buildings at full capacity, the new Centre will enhance translational capabilities by bringing together physical and biological sciences to increase collaboration and maximize scientific discovery. This expansion is key to maintaining the world-class reputation and competitiveness of Life Sciences at Dundee, and will further support expansion of the existing Drug Discovery Unit and collaborations with industry.

- **Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD):** Refurbishment work has begun at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD) to provide leading-edge teaching and research facilities befitting a 21st century college of art and design with an international profile. The refurbishment of DJCAD reflects changes in academic activity and student numbers over the years. Construction has begun on a new main entrance for DJCAD at the front of the Matthew Building which, once completed, will improve accessibility and provide a modern, welcoming and impressive glass-fronted entrance to students, staff and visitors alike on the Perth Road. Significant internal work has also been undertaken with the re-designation of facilities to create enhanced studio, learning and teaching space, and further phases of works have been scheduled to ensure ongoing investment in modernising the DJCAD environment over the coming years.

- **Medical School: Upgrading of teaching accommodation:** Approaches to teaching and learning in medicine have undergone significant change since the construction of the current teaching accommodation at the Ninewells Campus in the late 1960’s, and the agreed investment to upgrade the teaching accommodation for the Medical School will support a move a way from didactic, large group teaching sessions to small group, interactive, problem solving teaching with teaching in the clinical environment supported by technology in the form of e-learning and simulation. Divided into three phases to avoid disruption to teaching, once completed the work will allow the University to build upon its excellent status as a leading international Medical School.

- **Life Sciences: New Morgue Facilities for The Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification (CAHId):** CAHId has an international reputation for academic excellence in both education and research. The University has supported the development of new morgue facilities that will see CAHId become a centre of excellence, encouraging further international collaboration and recognition for the University’s forensic anthropologists and anatomists.
new facility has now been completed which will be the first in the UK to use new embalming techniques that open up opportunities for novel approaches to learning, teaching and research in life sciences, medicine and surgery.

Future Funding of Scottish Universities

The Higher Education sector has seen some significant changes to funding over the last year, as pressure on public funding continues to increase. However there has been some good news, with the funding update for 2012/13 from the SFC broadly indicating the reversal of the funding reduction seen in 2011/12 following the better than expected Government settlement for the sector. In particular the level of the teaching unit of resource has been restored to that of 2010/11, there has been an allocation of additional science places in universities with strong RAE profiles and the total number of places for Scottish and EU students has been maintained at 2011/12 levels.

Perhaps the most significant change in the funding landscape is related to the introduction of tuition fees for students domiciled in the rest of the UK (RUK). Following the UK Government’s decision to allow the tuition fee for students south of the border to be raised to a maximum of £9,000 per annum, legislation was introduced by the Scottish Government to address concerns over a predicted funding gap between Scottish and English Universities of up to £200m. The de-regulation of tuition fees allows Scottish institutions to charge RUK students a tuition fee from 2012/13, while maintaining the Scottish Government’s commitment not to introduce tuition fees for Scottish domiciled students. The University carefully modeled a range of options before announcing the introduction of a fee of £9,000 per annum for RUK students for 2012/13 entry. At the same time a suite of three-year degree options, and competitive bursaries and scholarships were developed and launched. Currently student applications levels are within modeled ranges, with a notable increase in EU student applications. We hope to realise a net financial benefit from the introduction of the new arrangements, however, the full impact of the introduction of fees for RUK students will not be known until later in the year, and the focus of Admissions & Student Recruitment has now shifted to the conversion of applications to acceptances and, subsequently, matriculations.

Learning and Teaching

The University continues to take pride in the quality of the Learning and Teaching experience offered, and this year the University was shortlisted for the Times Higher University of the year award. Once again the National Student Survey, which annually assesses the views of graduating students and achieves over a 60% response rate, affirmed the high level of satisfaction attributed to the quality of teaching and to the overall student experience. In addition, we are expecting some good news from the forthcoming THE student experience survey at the end of this month, where the University has traditionally performed very well, being placed top in Scotland and fifth in the UK last year.

This year, the University slipped from 140th to 176th in the Times Higher World Rankings, largely as a result of significant changes to methodology used. However, it highlighted areas of the University where there was room for further improvement and actions are being taken forward and evaluated with the aim of further improving the experience and outcomes for the students. The annual postgraduate Student Experience Surveys for taught and research postgraduates continued to reflect improvements in the postgraduate experience, while the University once more performed well in the International Student Barometer which again ranked the University of Dundee highly in the main elements.

The Library & Learning Centre (LLC) has continued to respond to student feedback, and to enhance the service available to students – increasing opening hours to 119 hours per week, and utilising modern technologies, software, databases and devices to ensure resources are findable, licensed, compatible and accessible. This approach is combined with modern facilities which enhance the social aspect of learning and the provision of support for academics in the use of advanced learning technologies.
Graduate employability remains a key focus of the University, with the Employability Committee, (led by Professor Chris Whatley, Head of the College of Arts & Social Sciences) working to: encourage the growth of degree pathways with modules addressing employability, develop internship programmes, and build upon the highly successful Dundee Graduate Skills Award Scheme which has seen around 1500 students register since its launch in 2010. This year, our Careers Service placement scheme was recognised at the National Placement & Internship Awards, coming second in the Best University Placement/Careers Service category, demonstrating the quality of the University's support for its graduates.

The University continues to value high quality teaching as part of its mission and strategy and acknowledged this with three awards to recognise innovative, excellent and lifelong contribution to teaching. This year the Honorary Graduates’ Award for Innovative Teaching and Inclusive Practice was awarded to Dr Aileen McGuigan and the TQFE Team from the school of Education, Social Work & Community Education, for "TQFE Tutor". The importance of the award was further highlighted by the inclusion of a presentation by the "TQFE Tutor" team at the annual Discovery Day Lectures, which showcased the commitment of the University to world-class teaching, alongside world-class research. The Senate Award for Excellence in Teaching was awarded to Dr Maureen Benwell (Life Sciences, Learning & Teaching), while the Chancellor's award for Lifetime Contribution to Teaching was awarded to Dr Maureen Benwell (Life Sciences Learning & Teaching), Ms Heather Marr (School of Nursing & Midwifery), and Dr Alex Wright (Politics, Humanities).

A crucially-important part of the high quality of student experience remains the effective contribution our academic staff make in teaching and supporting students’ learning. We are therefore continuing to establish a rigorous and transparent set of processes and criteria that will enable our best staff to develop and be rewarded for the important and distinctive expertise they contribute to the University’s success, including a review of promotion on the basis of Learning and Teaching criteria such as curriculum development and innovation, teaching, academic leadership and the development of new markets and income streams for taught programmes.

Research

Scottish Funding Council

Reflecting the priorities of the Scottish Government, there has been an increased level of concentration of Scottish Funding Council (SFC) research funding for 2012/13 on world-leading and internationally excellent research within the sector, which aligns well with our underlying strategic principles of ‘excellence, focus and impact’. The level of Research Excellence Grant funding provided to the sector from the SFC for 2012-13 has increased by £10M or 4.7%, with funding for 2* research removed and the weightings changed in favour of 4* research. The consequence of this is a sector wide re-alignment of funding. The award to the University has risen by 1.2% to £20.3M, placing it 4th in Scotland. There has also been an increase in the Research Postgraduate Grant and a restoration of funding to research pools following the cuts imposed last year.

A major theme underpinning the 2012/13 grant announcement from the SFC is university-industry collaboration, economic growth and a breaking down of any barriers to the exploitation of research for economic and wider societal benefit. This aligns with strategic and policy development across the wider UK higher education funding environment. Key initiatives being pursued by SFC include the creation of Innovation Centres in key sectors to provide direct industry academia links, foster entrepreneurship and serve as a focus for skills training; the development by universities of 'Easy Access Intellectual Property' models by 2012/13; and the establishment of a single 'Knowledge Exchange Office' (KEO) for Scotland within the next two years. The University’s Knowledge Transfer Grant award from the SFC for 2012/13 has increased by 10.5% compared to 2011/12, with the total award to the sector increasing by 9.6%.
Research Project Funding

The sector has faced a succession of challenges in winning research grant funding. In 2011 the Research Councils UK (RCUK) announced a series of efficiency savings and some charities have had to reduce both the number of awards and level of funding. Despite this challenging external research environment, the University continues to have success in areas of strategic priority. This is in part due to our concerted effort to collaborate with others in order to maximise both our research income and the value and impact of research funding. Significant new collaborations this year include:

- Design in Action, a new £5M hub for the Creative industries in Scotland with a specific focus on Design. The University was selected by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as one of four universities to lead these prestigious new 'Knowledge Exchange Hubs for the Creative Economy'.
- INN-Food, a £2.5M innovation network for food and drink, a collaboration amongst all 17 HEIs in Scotland together with ‘Interface - The knowledge connection for business’, working in partnership with business to encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in the food and drink sector in Scotland.
- The Target Development Fund, funded by the SFC Call for Knowledge Exchange proposals addressing the needs of Scottish industry, has been created in collaboration with TPP-Global Development to enable the progression of research discoveries into marketed human therapies.
- DIRECT (“Diabetes REsearCh for patient straTification”), a €45M consortium consisting of 20 academic institutions and 5 pharmaceutical companies focusing on the application of stratified medicine in diabetes funded by the EU Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI). IMI is Europe’s largest public-private initiative aiming to speed up the development of better and safer medicines for patients.

The University has had particular success this year in securing funding for collaborations researching neglected and orphan diseases, which struggle to attract research funding, but breakthrough discoveries made at the University have been funded for further development this year including:

- The Neglected Diseases Initiative has been renewed by the Wellcome Trust for a period of five years and has a new pharmaceutical partner in the form of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK). The University will work with GSK to deliver a new pre-clinical drug candidate for Kinetoplastid diseases.
- Under GSK’s new Discovery Partnerships with Academia initiative, the University now has two collaborations that will combine the company’s expertise in discovering and developing new medicines with our researcher’s expertise in rare and debilitating disorders - the first is in genetic skin disorders, which was the first collaboration to be launched under GSK’s new initiative, and the second is in an inherited brain disorder.

Research Awards Value

Recent analysis of awards made to the University confirmed that the total value of awards recorded to date for 2011/12 (£59.8M at 2 April 2012) remains comfortably ahead of the position at this time last year and the position at this point in 2009/10, when the final total recorded awards figure for the year was £93M. There has been a significant increase in the value of awards recorded from charities and industry, as well as recovery in the level of EU and Research Council awards this year in comparison to 2010/11. This is a very positive achievement given the continued financial pressures within the sector.

Research Excellence Framework

Preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014), the new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions, are well underway, with submissions due in November 2013. The University has completed a mid-term review which will inform decisions about our submission to the REF, and work is underway to complete the
REF strategy and a Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff (outlining the grade-point average required for inclusion in the REF submission).

**Governance**

Many of you will be aware from the press that in late September 2011 the University was invited to a meeting with the SFC to discuss the possibility of merger/closer collaboration with the University of Abertay. The meeting took place in November and was attended by myself, the acting Principal of Abertay and the Principal of Dundee College, alongside the Chief Executive of the SFC. The outcome of that meeting was an agreement that all three institutions would remain autonomous and independent and, with the support of the SFC, would engage in discussions on closer collaboration. With the distinct missions of the three institutions safeguarded, we can now resume routine open discussions with Abertay and Dundee College on articulation and collaboration which I hope will continue to prove fruitful.

Perhaps the most significant development in University Governance has been the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland, and the subsequent report of the review panel chaired by Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski on 1 February 2012 and endorsed by Cabinet Secretary, Mike Russell. The recommendations were wide-ranging, and if implemented in their entirety would represent significant change to the way Universities in Scotland are governed. Both Court and Senate discussed the report at length. Some of the recommendations were seen to be uncontroversial, some even reflected our own practice at Dundee, others lacked the detail for us to determine precisely what the effects would be, and still others will require serious discussion and debate and may even then remain unpalatable. There was however collective concern at the potential for the recommendations to undermine the autonomy of individual institutions particularly in terms of the introduction of a single statute. In his statement to the Scottish parliament, Mike Russell indicated that he broadly welcomed the recommendations in the report and that he wished to move forwards ‘working closely with the sector’. At this time it remains unclear how this consultation will manifest itself. The recommendation for a Code of Practice on governance for Scottish Universities is one which the sector is proposing to take forwards, thus allowing the sector to determine for itself, in discussion with stakeholders, a framework for best governance practice.

The last year has also seen the creation of the new directorate of ‘Policy, Governance & Legal affairs’ at the University of Dundee, bringing together governance of both Court and Senate, with Quality Assurance and Legal Services.

Following a review of the work of the Graduates’ Council by the Graduates’ Council Business Committee, Senate and Court have received proposals from the Graduates Council Business Committee outlining desired changes to the Charter, Statute 20 (Graduates’ Council), Ordinance 20 (Graduates’ Council), and Graduates’ Council Regulations. The proposed changes will be outlined separately on the agenda, however I welcome the willingness of the Business Committee to take forwards such a review.
Report from Convener, Business Committee

Introduction

This will be my final report to the Council as Convener of the Business Committee. I have thoroughly enjoyed the last four years of office as the Convener and it has been an honour and a privilege to have been involved in a small but important way in the work of the University of Dundee.

I will start off with a number of thanks. Firstly, to our Vice Convener, Charles Lovatt, for his loyal support often delivered as questions and queries but always in a supportive manner! In addition, members of the Business Committee have provided time and commitment to support the work over the twelve months so thanks are due to them all. To Barbara Boyle for all her work in the support of the Committee I express my warm thanks and to Keith Winter who is the nominee for my successor I wish him well in his term of office and the work that he is to undertake.

I also want to mention Frank Zwolinski’s enormous contribution to the Graduates’ Council Business Committee over many years. He is retiring this year and we wish him well.

Meetings

The Business Committee has met on two occasions in the last year and the Convener’s Sub Committee on one occasion. At our September Business Committee meeting we welcomed our two new members, David Gauld and Viv White, along with Iain Kennedy who had recently been appointed as President of Dundee University Students’ Association, when we discussed in detail the then proposed merger between the University of Dundee and the University of Abertay. As we all know now the merger was strangled at birth but the discussion we had, which was extremely well structured and informed, helped our Assessors on Court to articulate the thoughts of a wider group of graduates who have the interests of the University of Dundee very much at heart.

Discovery Lecture

Following last year’s very successful lecture our speakers this year, on the 21 April, will be Heather Couper and Nigel Henbest presenting “Cosmic Quest: The Story of Astronomy”. This is a topic of perennial interest and we are very grateful for the help of the University in arranging the lecture. As usual the lecture will be followed by a Civic Reception. I would like to place on record my personal thanks to Lord Provost John Letford for his continued support in all of these events.

Graduates’ Council Fund

Only three applications have been received over the last year:

a. Anna Dimitrova & Stefan Tomov to attend Model European Union 2011
b. Rebecca Donnelly to attend 8th European Mathematical & Theoretical Biology Conference 2011
c. Ruth Thomson (Architecture) for funding towards the provision of a Macro Micro Prototype Studio Build in the Botanic Gardens

Unfortunately none of these adequately met the desired criteria and consequently the Board of Directors declined to provide support.

University Court
Eric Sanderson, a member of the Graduates’ Council, has carried out the role as Chair of the University Court in an exemplary way and we owe him thanks for all his work and dedication in this regard.

I finally want to thank Professor Ann Burchell and Mr Iain Wright for all their work and commitment as Graduates’ Council Assessors on Court. They are excellent advocates for the Graduate body.

Events

During the year I have attended a variety of events including the University Carol Service, several graduations and other social events. It has always been a delight to represent the Graduates’ Council on such occasions.

The Future

The Annual Meeting will be considering proposals to move from a Graduates’ Council to a Graduates’ Association. Separate papers deal with the detail of this and it only remains for me to wish the new Association well once it is formally established.
GRADUATES’ COUNCIL  
ANNUAL MEETING  
Saturday 21 April 2012  
Graduates’ Council Assessors’ Report  
Presented by Ann Burchell

Current Assessors  
The Graduates’ Council has the privilege of electing two Assessors to serve for four years on the University Court, which is the governing body of the University. The two current Assessors are Iain Wright and myself. Iain’s first term of office was from August 2007 until July 2011 and he was re-elected for a second four-year term starting on 1st August 2011. I first became an Assessor on the 1st August 2009 and my current four-year term of office expires on 31 July 2013.

During the last year and indeed throughout the period of our office both Iain and I have been active members of Court. We have both attended all Court meetings (the only exception being that I missed one when I was stuck in the USA thanks to the Ash Cloud a couple of years ago). In addition during the last year, Iain has been a member of the University Finance Committee and I have been a member of the University Audit Committee. Iain and I are also both members of the University Governance & Nominations Committee.

I am an accredited mediator and during my term of office on Court I have been part of the University’s EDR (early dispute resolution) team and I have mediated in many disputes large and small across the various University Colleges and Directorates. While this activity is not directly related to my role of Graduates’ Council Assessor I do strongly believe that it is an appropriate role for members of University Court and indeed last year three members of Court played active roles in the EDR team.

Governance  
During our time on Court both Iain and I have taken particular interest in University Governance and Iain played a leading role in the recent modernisation of University Governance and procedures. The fact that we have modernised our University’s Governance recently means that a number of the recommendations in the 2012 Review of Higher Education Governance In Scotland already reflect our practice in Dundee.

This year we have both been very involved in the review of Governance of Graduates’ Council not only as members of the Graduates’ Council Business Committee but also as Members of the Governance and Nominations Committee and Court. A Report on the proposed changes to the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances of the University and Graduates’ Council regulations will be given later during this meeting.

The Principal's report contains a lot of information about issues that have involved Court this year and I will not be repetitive but I would just like to highlight two things.

These are challenging and very uncertain economic times and I would like to congratulate the Principal and Officers of the University on the University's improved financial position in 2010/11. I believe this places the University in a good position to face the economic uncertainties of the next few years.
UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE
GRADUATES’ COUNCIL

Changes to the Charter, Statute 20 (Graduates’ Council), Ordinance 20 (Graduates’ Council), and Graduates’ Council Regulations

The following paper outlines proposed changes to the Charter, Statute 20 (Graduates’ Council), Ordinance 20 (Graduates’ Council), and Graduates’ Council Regulations.

In line with best practice, the Business Committee has undertaken a review of the governance of the Graduates’ Council and has proposed a number of changes.

The main changes proposed to the Charter, Statute 20 and Ordinance 20 are:

- renaming the “Graduates’ Council” to the “Graduates’ Association” so as to make the Council more welcoming to potential members, and to better reflect the activities and duties currently undertaken by the Graduates’ Council;
- designating the convener of the Business Committee as chair of the annual meeting of the Graduates’ Council, in place of the Chancellor or in his absence the Principal.

The main changes proposed to regulations governing the working of the Graduates’ Council, and the election of its Assessors to Court are:

- reducing the size of the Committee, and altering its composition and bringing terms of office in-line with those of Court members;
- improving the way in which information about the role of the Assessors is made available to candidates and the electorate;
- allowing candidates for Assessors to self nominate rather than require nominators and seconders;
- encouraging potential candidates for Assessor to discuss the requirements of the role with senior members of the Business Committee.

Court has reviewed and approved in principle the proposed changes to the Charter, Statute 20 and Ordinance 20. These changes require the approval of the Privy Council.

Changes to the Graduates’ Council regulations are presented as draft changes which will be discussed again at the next Court meeting. These changes require only the approval of Court.