

Approved



## **UNIVERSITY COURT**

### **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the University Court held on 15 February 2017 at 2pm in the Boardroom of the University.

Acting Chair: Professor E Wilson

Mr M Batho		Professor S Olivier
Mrs L Baxter	Mr R Fletcher	Right Rev Dr N Peyton
Ms A Boyle	Ms G Ghafoor	Mr C Rae
Mr J Burt	Dr M Hinfelaar	Mrs S Scott
Ms A Cameron	Mr G MacDougall	Professor N Seaton
Dr A Cornish	Mr C Marshall	Mr M Shaw
Mr D Dorward		Dr S Waiton

Secretary: Mrs S Stewart  
Clerk to Court: Dr A Ramsay

In attendance: Professor V Kempe  
Ms N McClelland  
Mr G McCullough  
Mr D Reeves  
Professor C Stathopoulos  
Mrs C Summers (Items 54, 55 & 56)  
Dr R Wade

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr E Frizzell, Mr M Grossi, Dr J Rees and Mr I McDonald.

### **NON-RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS**

#### 49 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and, in particular, welcomed Professor V Kempe, Ms N McClelland, Professor C Stathopoulos and Dr R Wade, who were attending as observers.

Court thanked the University for the opportunity to visit the newly-located Directorate of External & Corporate Relations. Members commended the progress made to date and looked forward to future achievements.

#### 50 DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to indicate if they had, or could be perceived to have, a conflict of interest in relation to the items for

discussion. None was declared.

51 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIR'S COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2017

Court noted the above minutes, submitted for information as Enclosure 31.

52 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2016 – UNRESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

Court approved the above minutes, submitted as Enclosure 32, as an accurate record.

53 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

53.1 Teaching Excellence Framework

(paragraph 32 refers)

The University Secretary advised Court that the University had submitted to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and that further information could be provided on request.

Thereafter, Court noted that there were no other matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

54 SFC FUNDING

CT/0217/33

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the above paper, intended to provide Court with an update on the indicative Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funding allocations for academic year 2017/2018. Mrs Summers advised members that, in line with the Scottish Government's draft budget for 2017/2018, the overall resource for the HE sector had reduced by 1.3% in cash terms, representing a real terms reduction of 2.7%.

Court noted that the overall position for Abertay showed no change from 2016/2017, in line with the overall sector position. However, this position masked a reduction in teaching funding, offset by one-off transitional funding and an increase in research funding. Mrs Summers advised members that the indicative funding allocation compared favourably to the planning assumption of a reduction of 5%, although the impact of underlying changes in funding methodology would be a further 4% reduction in teaching funding from 2018/2019 onwards.

Members were apprised of changes to funding arrangements for taught postgraduate provision, resulting in a reduction of £120k, which would impact the institution in 2018/2019. Mrs Summers advised Court that the 2017/2018 announcement also confirmed the continuation of additional funded places for articulation and the prolongation of the fully-funded places for MSc Food and Drink Innovation.

Total research funding had been maintained at sector level with institutional allocations changed to reflect the phasing in of the new research funding model, which would result in Abertay's total funding for research and innovation increasing by 7.8%. No strategic funding had been allocated to individual institutions as yet but it was unlikely that any new strategic project would be funded.

Thereafter, Court noted the report and the current position.

55 DRAFT OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2017/2018

CT/0217/34

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the above draft Outcome Agreement with the SFC for academic year 2017/2018 for Court's approval prior to submission to SFC. Mrs Summers advised Court that the document had been produced on the basis that the final funding allocation for 2017/2018 (expected in April) would be in line with the indicative allocation made on 10 February. The University would indicate to the SFC at the point of submission that the document would be provisional, subject to confirmation of funding for 2017/2018.

Members noted that a draft agreement had been discussed with the University's Outcome Agreement Manager in January and that, in light of the one-year funding settlement, the agreement was for one year only and had been agreed with the SFC. Feedback received from SFC following the January meeting had been incorporated into the document, which had been approved by the Finance & Corporate Performance Committee on 30 January.

Members considered the equality agenda and noted that applicants were admitted on merit, using contextual data where relevant. The University was working with the Equality Challenge Unit in developing its marketing materials and consideration would be given in future to the inclusion of targets on the protected characteristics. Competition between institutions to recruit students from SIMD20 postcodes as a national measure was discussed and members were advised that 65% of entrants eligible for contextual offers were not from SIMD 20 postcodes, which demonstrated the University's commitment to offering opportunities to potential students from the widest possible range of backgrounds.

The future of the Dundee Academy of Sport as a vehicle to improve the number of entrants from SHEP schools was discussed. Court noted that SFC funding would expire in 2017 and that, although the University would wish to see the project continue, it did not form part of Abertay's core business.

In general discussion, members noted the complexity of the issues reflected in the document and requested that Court be given an opportunity to discuss these in greater detail at a future date.

Thereafter, Court approved the document, noting that minor editorial and presentational changes would require to be made.

56 STRATEGIC DIALOGUE UPDATE

CT/0217/35

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the above update on the Strategic Dialogue Meeting (SDM) with the SFC, which would be held on 2 May 2017. Mrs Summers advised members that the previous SDM had been held in 2014 and that positive feedback had been received from staff and students.

Members noted the format and timetable for the SDM, which would involve the participation of Court members in the dialogue and which would afford the University an opportunity to highlight key developments at Abertay and to focus on the contribution made to Scottish Government priority areas.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

*[Secretary's note: the Director of Strategic Planning left the meeting at this point]*

57 SENATE MEMBERSHIP: PROPOSAL FOR CHANGE

CT/0217/36

Court received and considered the above proposal to change the membership of Senate in response to the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. Members noted that a short-life working group had been established which had included representatives from all of the existing categories of member on Senate.

Senate had considered the proposal made by the working group at its meeting in November 2016. There had been a general consensus in favour of the proposal although two objections had been noted. The proposal was therefore submitted for Court's approval as having the broad support of Senate.

One Court member expressed the opinion that the report did not accurately reflect the degree of opposition to the proposal voiced at Senate and requested that Court oppose the recommendation. Court was advised that, although Senate's deliberations had been both in-depth and animated, the document submitted to Court was reflective of the Senate view. That Court could call upon those members who had attended the meeting as observers was noted.

Thereafter, Court approved the change to the membership and composition of Senate.

58 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT REPORT 2016

CT/0217/37

Court received and considered the above annual report on Freedom of Information requests received by the University in the period 1 January – 31 December 2016. Members noted that a very high rate of timely responses continued to be provided to requesters within the statutory deadline of 20 working days.

The Clerk to Court advised members that requests had increased, not only in number but also in complexity and often required internal responses from a number of Schools and/or Service. This had resulted in a slight increase in response times and a marginally elevated number of late responses.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

59 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2017

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 38, were approved.

The following matters were noted:

59.1 Internal Audit: Management report on review of procurement  
(paragraph 35.2 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a report reviewing purchasing and procurement across the University. Six recommendations had been made, of which two had been categorised as moderate and four as low-grade control weaknesses, all of which had been approved by management.

59.2 Internal Audit: Management report on review of research grant management

(paragraph 35.3 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a report reviewing research grant management within the University. Seven recommendations had been made, of which one had been categorised as high, two had been categorised as moderate and four as low-grade control weaknesses. All recommendations had been approved by management.

59.3 Internal Audit: Management report on implementation of recommendations

(paragraph 36 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a report to determine progress made by management in implementing previously-agreed internal audit recommendations. Members noted that good progress had been made overall.

59.4 Internal and External Audit Contracts

Court noted that the Committee had approved the recommendation that BDO be awarded the internal audit contract for three years (with extension for a further two), and that Ernst & Young be awarded the external audit contract for an equivalent period.

60 FINANCE & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2017

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 39, were approved.

The following matter was approved:

60.1 Capital Project Proposals

(paragraph 38 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee to approve expenditure for two projects in relation to the redevelopment of the Bernard King Library and the recladding of the north elevation of the Kydd Building.

The following matters were noted:

60.2 University Finance Report

(paragraph 36 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the above report, which provided the Committee with an integrated view of the University's current financial position including the 2017 result to date, an examination of future outlook, Debt Management and Treasury Management.

60.3 Investment Management Tender (paragraph 37 refers)  
Court noted that the Committee had approved the appointment of UBS to provide investment management services from February 2017 until February 2010, with an option to extend for a further two-month periods.

60.4 Kydd Building Project Update (paragraph 39 refers)  
Court noted that the Committee had received an update from the Director of Operations on progress made on the current Kydd Building laboratory and cladding project.

61 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2017

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 40, were approved.

The following matters were noted:

61.1 Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act: Implementation update (paragraph 24 refers)  
Court noted that the Committee had received an update on the University's thinking in relation to the implementation of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act.

61.2 Periodic Review of Court's effectiveness (paragraph 27 refers)  
Court noted the Committee's approval of the arrangements for the periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of Court and its committees.

61.3 Membership of Court (paragraph 28 refers)  
Court noted that the Committee had agreed to consider further the membership of the Finance & Corporate Performance Committee.

62 PEOPLE, HEALTH & EQUALITY COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2017

Court received and approved the minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 41.

The following matters were noted:

62.1 Sickness Absence Report (paragraph 35 refers)  
Court noted the Committee's consideration of the above report on sickness absence, including support and actions to improve sickness absence in the future.

62.2 Occupational Health Report (paragraph 36 refers)  
Court noted the Committee's consideration of a report on referrals to Occupational Health.

63 DRAFT COURT AND COURT COMMITTEE CALENDAR 2017/2018 CT/0217/42  
Court received and considered the above draft calendar for meetings of Court and its committees during session 2017/2018. Members, and in particular Committee Chairs, were requested to indicate any problems with the dates proposed to the University Secretary or the Clerk to Court.

Court noted that the calendar would be circulated once finalised.

64 BREXIT UPDATE CT/0217/43  
Court received a confidential update from the Principal on the impact of Brexit on the University following the Prime Minister's statement on 17 January.

65 DATE OF NEXT MEETING  
Court noted that the next meeting would take place on Saturday 22 April 2017, preceded by the Court conference from the evening of Friday 21 April 2017 at the Murrayshall House Hotel, Scone.

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**CHAIR**