



324th STATUTORY MEETING OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN GENERAL COUNCIL

Date: **Saturday, 16 May 2026**

Venue: **King's College Conference Centre** and via **Microsoft Teams**

Timing: **11.00-13.00 UK GMT** (Teas & Coffees from 10.30 in James McKay Hall)

AGENDA

1. MINUTES OF THE 323rd MEETING
2. MATTERS ARISING
3. CAMPUS UPDATE
Presentation from Morag Beers, Director of Estates and Facilities
4. UNIVERSITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR UPDATE
Professor Peter Edwards, Principal & Vice-Chancellor
5. FINANCE UPDATE
Mark White, Chief Financial Officer
6. ADAPTING FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS: OVERVIEW OF REFORM OF ACADEMIC STRUCTURES
Professor Peter Edwards, Principal & Vice-Chancellor
7. BUSINESS COMMITTEE CONVENER'S UPDATE
Professor Norman Hutchison

Updates from the Business Committee's three sub-committees:

- Alumni Relations – Daniel Montgomery
- Commercialisation – Hugh Galbraith – Verbal Update
- Student Employability - Xiaouo Zhao – Verbal Update

GC26:1605.01

8. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE
 - i. Voting arrangements
 - ii. Supporting Statements

GC26:1605.02

GC25:1605.03

9. NOTICE OF THE 325th STATUTORY MEETING

The 325th statutory meeting of the General Council will be held on Saturday, 5th December 2026, from 11am to 1pm in King's College Conference Centre and via Microsoft Teams.



GENERAL COUNCIL

MINUTE OF THE 323rd STATUTORY MEETING

The 323rd statutory meeting of the General Council was held in King's College Conference Centre and online on Saturday, 6th December 2025. The Convener of the Business Committee, Professor Norman Hutchison, was in the Chair.

1. WELCOME

The Convener welcomed attendees and noted that the meeting was quorate with 20 people present at King's College Conference Centre, and 11 people attending online. The Convener also introduced himself and Daniel Montgomery, Vice-Convener of the Business Committee, who took up their new roles on 1st October 2025. He thanked Duncan Macniven and Jenny Mordue who had held those respective roles until 31st September 2025.

Congratulations were also expressed to Professor Peter Edwards who took up the role of Principal & Vice-Chancellor on 1 November following the retirement of Professor George Boyne on 31 October. Professor Edwards was unable to attend the meeting but will be invited to the next meeting of General Council in May 2026.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the last General Council meeting on Saturday, 17th May 2025 were proposed by Iona Fyfe, University Rector, and seconded by Daniel Montgomery.

3. CONVENER'S UPDATE

The Convener reported that at the October meeting of the Business Committee the implications of artificial intelligence in higher education was discussed. The Business Committee has now established three sub-committees focusing on Commercialisation, Student Employability, and Alumni Engagement. It is intended that the outcomes of their work will be reported to the June 2026 meeting of University Court.

Disappointment was expressed regarding the current level of engagement with Court. The previous system of electing four General Council assessors has changed to the nomination of four independent members. While this arrangement initially worked well, it is no longer effective, and there are currently no Court members

serving on the Business Committee. The Business Committee has agreed to propose a joint appointment process for independent members of Court and has requested that four members join the Business Committee. As this request was made only recently, it is acknowledged that it is too early for a formal response.

The Convener emphasised that the General Council remains an important part of the University's governance structure. Members discussed the importance of ensuring diverse voices are represented in decision-making processes.

4. UNIVERSITY UPDATE

Dr Hulda Sveinsdottir, Director of Strategic Planning, Project & Corporate Governance and Deputy University Secretary, provided an update on recent developments. She reported that Professor George Boyne retired at the end of October after leading the development of Aberdeen 2040 and steering the University through significant challenges, including Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cost-of-living crisis. Professor Peter Edwards has been appointed Principal and Vice-Chancellor, with further leadership changes in the Senior Management Team expected.

Julie Ashworth, Senior Governor of the University, recently announced her departure after five years of service. Court member Neil Calvert will assume the role on an interim basis.

The Council noted the University's strong performance in recent league tables. In the Guardian University Guide 2026, we ranked 18th in the UK and 3rd in Scotland. In the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026, we were placed joint 23rd in the UK, and we were ranked 3rd in the devolved nations for Overall Student Satisfaction in the National Student Survey 2025.

Dr Sveinsdottir also highlighted the QS World University Rankings and confirmed that an email will be circulated with details on how members can contribute. Employers and academic staff are invited to provide feedback on the quality of universities and graduates globally, and members were encouraged to participate and promote engagement.

Finally, Dr Sveinsdottir outlined the University's change programme, Adapting for Continued Success, which will introduce a new operating model for the University in 2026. Proposals from the initiative will be shared at a future meeting of the Business Committee.

5. RESEARCH UPDATE

Professor Ben Tatler, Dean for Research Culture, and John Wrighton, Head of Research Strategy & Policy & REF Manager, presented a research update highlighting key achievements and strategic priorities.

General Council noted the successful celebration of the University's 530th anniversary during Founders' Week, which showcased Aberdeen's heritage and global research impact. Events included a community-wide Discovery Day and an inaugural lecture delivered by Regius Professor Mirella Delibegovic.

Significant progress was reported in health research, particularly the development of the Field Cycling Imager in Aberdeen. This technology enables imaging of structures previously undetectable by conventional MRI and has already contributed to breakthroughs in diagnosing and treating breast cancer and stroke.

Members were briefed on interdisciplinary research addressing climate challenges, notably the "Futures of Listening" project, which supports vulnerable communities in Jakarta and Istanbul facing water-related risks linked to climate change and poor policy frameworks.

General Council welcomed news of major funding successes, including over £10.5 million from UKRI for doctoral training programmes across diverse disciplines. The Celtic Crescent Creative Economy initiative was highlighted for its focus on bilingual, rural, and coastal communities within the UK's creative sector.

The University's commitment to sustainability was reaffirmed through the launch of its Net Zero 2024 Strategy and leadership of the £5.7 million JUST-Systems project, which places communities at the centre of the transition to Net Zero.

Aberdeen's leadership in interdisciplinary research was emphasised, supported by newly appointed fellows, directors, and PhD students. Planned initiatives include a public lecture, a Scottish Parliament event, and the fourth annual North-East Culture Summit in 2026. The University's strong performance was noted, ranking in the top 10% globally and second in the UK for interdisciplinary science.

Further updates included the renewal of the Technician Commitment, accompanied by a three-year action plan to enhance visibility, recognition, and career development for technical staff. Research income figures were presented, confirming continued financial strength.

The Council then considered preparations for REF2029. Members were advised of a three-month pause in the criteria-setting process announced by Research England, although the overall timetable remains unchanged. Key changes to the framework were outlined, including assessment at institutional and disciplinary levels, with three core elements: Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding, Engagement and Impact, and People, Culture and Environment. Additional adjustments include decoupling individuals from outputs, reliance on HESA data for volume measures, and simplified processes for staff circumstances.

During the discussion, members reflected on the REF2021 results, noting that while outputs performed well, impact and environment were areas of concern. This has prompted a significant change in approach for REF2029, including the appointment of three Deans with responsibility for different sections of the exercise, which is an innovation for the University. It was acknowledged that staff numbers have reduced from 698 in the previous cycle to approximately 660, representing a 5.5% decrease.

The inclusion of technicians in the process was welcomed as a positive development.

Questions were raised regarding strategies to improve impact, engagement with alumni networks, and the implications of staff departures. The ability to travel and maintain external connections was also discussed. Professor Tatler highlighted that the University is undertaking work that is highly relevant and aligned with its strategic priorities.

6. STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY

Tracey Innes, Assistant Director and Head of Careers, presented an update on employability initiatives. She began by outlining the strategic priorities aligned with the Aberdeen 2040 vision, which emphasises preparing graduates for diverse future workplaces through challenge-led teaching, real-world problem solving, and increased opportunities for work-based learning via placements and volunteering. Tracey noted a significant improvement in graduate outcomes, with the University rising 20 and 23 places respectively in UK rankings for employability metrics, now positioned in the top quartile for Graduate Prospects Outcomes.

The Careers and Employability Service continue to deliver on its vision of inspiring and supporting career success through collaboration and innovation. Its mission centres on enabling students to explore career options, develop employability skills and confidence, and connect with employers regionally, nationally, and globally. This is achieved through a mix of curricular, co-curricular, and work-related activities. Performance highlights for 2024–25 included 3,127 careers appointments, 702 online queries answered, and strong engagement with digital tools such as CareerSet (1,532 sign-ups and 8,256 CV uploads) and Interview Success (570 users).

Co-curricular programmes remain a key feature, with 38 students participating in the *bp* Student Tutoring Programme and 108 in the Career Mentoring Programme. Careers fairs also attracted strong engagement: Term 1 events included Law, Energy & Engineering, Business & Finance, and Part-time Jobs fairs, collectively hosting 134 organisations and drawing 2,001 students. A Volunteering event is scheduled for 19 February 2026.

Work-based learning opportunities are expanding, with the successful launch of a team-based course involving 23 students across four projects. The Business School piloted work-based learning projects in its postgraduate programmes during summer 2025 and plans to scale this to 80 students between January and August 2026. Similarly, the ABDN Internships programme continues to grow, delivering 120 paid internships in 2024–25 and offering 48 paid part-time internships in Term 1 of the current academic year, which attracted over 1,200 applications.

Tracey also highlighted an emerging focus on artificial intelligence in the careers context, with a research project underway to explore its potential applications.

Actions and next steps are being developed to integrate AI tools into careers support services.

Members of the General Council were encouraged to review the Careers Annual Report and Internships Report, both available online, and to contact the Careers Service for further information. The update concluded with an invitation for General Council members to engage with these initiatives and support ongoing efforts to enhance graduate employability.

During the discussion, it was noted that engaging students with employability remains a challenge, as many do not consider career planning until they are close to graduation. The question was raised on how to better reach those who are currently disengaged. It was suggested that employability skills should be embedded within the curriculum rather than treated as an additional activity, as these skills are closely linked to what students are already learning. Members agreed that lecturers and course coordinators have an important role in integrating these elements into teaching and assessment.

7. ALUMNI RELATIONS

Clare Livingston, Interim Director of Advancement, delivered an update on the work done by Alumni Relations, and its importance for the University. Clare emphasized that alumni engagement enhances the University's reputation, supports students and research, and ensures long-term sustainability. The General Council was acknowledged as a key partner in amplifying alumni engagement and acting as ambassadors.

The University has a global alumni community of over 148,000 graduates across 170 countries. Initiatives such as the alumni travel club, the launch of the second University of Aberdeen Gin, and the establishment of global chapters were highlighted as ways to keep alumni connected. Currently, there are 520 active volunteers and 260 career mentors contributing to these efforts.

The Development & Alumni Relations team manages alumni relations, events, communications, and philanthropy, working collaboratively with academic schools and professional services to align engagement with Aberdeen 2040 strategic priorities. Their work centres on three pillars: engaging alumni through events and digital communities, delivering tangible benefits such as improved employability, and sustaining relationships through philanthropy and stewardship.

Activities and impact were showcased through multichannel communications, including newsletters, social media, and LinkedIn communities, as well as flagship events like reunions and lectures. Alumni volunteering and mentoring programs were highlighted for their role in supporting students' career development. Additional benefits include campus discounts and postgraduate study incentives.

The University's global reach was underscored by hosting 61 events in 22 countries and launching five new alumni chapters in London, Bangalore, Guangzhou, Pakistan, and Singapore. Alumni contributions extend beyond networking, enriching

student experiences through guest lectures, skills workshops, and research advocacy. Philanthropy was presented as a partnership approach, with targeted campaigns supporting student hardship, scholarships, and medical research.

Looking ahead, the General Council was invited to play an active role in expanding volunteering, mentoring, and digital engagement, as well as acting as ambassadors and supporting philanthropic initiatives. Members were encouraged to contribute in ways that align with their interests, reinforcing shared responsibility for the University's success.

Finally, alumni were reminded of opportunities to get involved through volunteering, mentoring, and giving, and of the range of benefits available to graduates, including campus-based discounts and postgraduate study offers. The presentation concluded with a call to stay connected through University communications and alumni networks.

8. BOOK LAUNCH

Dr Duncan Macniven highlighted the publication of a book detailing the history of the General Council of the University of Aberdeen, titled: "The General Council of the University of Aberdeen 1960 – 2020".

The new volume, authored by Dr Charles Calder, formerly Lecturer in English at the University, updates the history originally published in 1963, which covered the first century of the Council. Work on the book commenced in 2018, and the General Council expressed its appreciation to Dr Calder for his significant contribution, acknowledging that a round of applause was well deserved.

Dr Calder's work is described as a book about people and the University, focusing on the contributions of diverse alumni and reflecting the evolution of the University during a period of significant and unprecedented change.

The book will be of interest to readers concerned with the University and with university governance and is available to purchase from the University shop for £15. A £3 discount was offered to General Council members who attended the meeting.

9. MEMBERSHIP OF GENERAL COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE: ELECTION TIMELINE AND PROCESS

The General Council considered a paper outlining the process and indicative timeline for nominations and elections to the Business Committee, in line with standing order number 20 and the Universities (Scotland) Act 1932.

The paper confirmed that nominations will open in the week commencing 9 March 2026 and close at noon on 30 March 2026. Should nominations exceed the number of vacancies, an election by ballot will be held at the statutory meeting on 16 May 2026, using the online single transferable vote system previously employed.

Successful candidates will take up their positions on 1 October 2026. The paper also noted that several current members of the Business Committee may seek re-election, while two members will retire after completing three terms. The exact number of vacancies will be confirmed when nominations are called.

The General Council approved the proposed timeline and noted the process for appointments to the Business Committee.

10. NOTICE OF THE 324th STATUTORY MEETING

The Convener noted his thanks to all the speakers at the meeting and University staff who facilitated the event. The 324th Statutory Meeting of the General Council will be held on Saturday, 16th May 2026 at 11am in King's College Conference Centre.

Meetings of the Raising Engagement with Alumni Sub-Committee of the Business Committee of the General Council

The Sub-Committee has met on three occasions, chaired by Dan Montgomery (DM). We were delighted to be hosted by the Directorate of Development & Alumni Relations in the Powis Gate building and grateful to them for agreeing that at least one of the team would participate in each meeting. Colleagues Claire Livingston (CL) and Fiona Urquhart (FU) took a keen interest. We were also joined on one occasion by Nicole Cochrane (NC) and, on another, by Jamie Allan (JA) both of whom are Alumni Relations Officers on the team.

Topics for discussion were identified and included:

- Noting the role of members of the General Council as ‘ambassadors and connectors’ and maximising ways in which the GC can assist.
- Methods of contact: full email inboxes present a common problem, with recipients understandably ignoring excessive numbers of messages. Other universities operate a digital platform. This represents a considerable initial investment but a detailed proposal could be shared with the BC with a view to gaining the approval and backing of the committee and the GC.
- Volunteering.
- Mentoring (with interest and involvement by students varying year to year).
- Internships and support generally, including investigating putting recent graduates in touch with those who are more established in careers in locations where both parties are based. This may be particularly useful for those abroad and/or who have studied online.
- The BC could be invited to make regular contributions to *Aberdeen*, the magazine for alumni, *ezines*, *social media* and other communications from Advancement/AR.
- Creating a ‘focus group’ and contacting a) a number of current students and b) recent graduates to establish their feelings about maintaining contact with the University. Is this of interest? Which method of ongoing contact would they welcome? Would they engage in person with events? Which?
- Similar enquiries could be made with the Students’ Union through Christina Schmid, President, who is known to us and who regularly attends BC meetings.
- DM contacted the AR team at Robert Gordon’s College, with whom he already works on a weekly basis, to ask more about their practices and experiences when maximising engagement with former pupils.
- Creating a ‘Homecoming’ week or weekend at the same time every year so that graduates become aware of a regular annual event which could be added to diaries at

an early point. This might, for example, be linked to Founder's Week, with invitations issued to specific events e.g. the Chapel Founder's Day service, 'Discovery Day' for families and public lectures. Graduation times might be another possibility, taking advantage of facilities already in place including the marquee.

CL and FU outlined various aspects of current practice and provision, highlighting high levels of loyalty and warmth of feeling from graduates towards the University, meaning that the potential for further development of contact and engagement is a very realistic possibility.

A shift in patterns of engagement has been noted since COVID and lockdown, but interest remains high and research into ways in which to promote continuing and increased engagement continues.

Prior to graduation, all graduands are invited to provide information which includes their interest in maintaining contact and email addresses etc. It was pointed out that GDPR means that of the approx. 150,000 members of the General Council in 170 countries (newly increased following the November 2025 graduations), contact is currently only possible with a small percentage.

Two separate methods of engagement were mentioned: publicity and events organised by the Alumni Relations team and through Chapters, which operate in many countries and which, although they differ in structure and management, operate largely independently of the University. WhatsApp groups enable Chapter members to stay in touch. A group has been created for 'Chapter Leaders' which has enabled increased contact and the sharing of good practice.

On the question of alumni engagement at other universities, it is felt that Aberdeen generally 'punches above its weight' both in terms of outreach and participation. Groups who shared common interests through, for example, participation in sport or music while at the University are particularly successful in maintaining contact.

Reunions are well attended. DM experienced the hospitality of AR at his own class reunion in September 2025 and repeated his thanks and appreciation for the warm and enthusiastic welcome received, which he is sure is typical of the experience of all former students returning for such events.

Some events which are organised should lend themselves to career development and networking whilst others may attract alumni more for the social and community aspects of engagement. It will be interesting to monitor potential additions to the Founders' Week programme.

NC highlighted work currently being undertaken to engage with Alumni and to invite comment from the sub-committee, and the wider BC, on this work and on new initiatives which we feel would be welcomed by alumni and encourage greater participation in events and contact with

the University generally. She mentioned the level of engagement, which she feels was strong post-COVID but which, although still highly positive, has now dropped off to some extent.

Events such as the forthcoming Founders' Week, whilst currently offering a range of interesting events, offer scope for development, perhaps along the lines of the 'Homecoming Week' as above.

Other options include 'Meet and Greet' events with the Student Societies, guided tours and day trips. There was mention of a proposed visit to Parliament through the London Chapter in the coming months.

The possibility of a dinner/ceilidh was mentioned, perhaps coinciding with Founders' Week. This might have cost implications in the early stages but could develop into a major annual event.

The types of event which we, and Alumni Relations staff, feel would be most appropriate going forward were discussed. It was felt that some events would lend themselves to career development and networking whilst others may attract alumni more for the social and community aspects of engagement. It was generally felt that events run by the University (as opposed to those which may be offered by Chapters elsewhere or indeed a similar group which might evolve in Aberdeen) should have a structure, perhaps with a high-profile speaker and a drinks reception. Some events could be 'school specific' to attract alumni with academic interests and expertise whilst others could be aimed at a much wider audience. It was suggested that the University might, with such talks and presentations, concentrate on topics and fields of expertise which are peculiar to the University and so will be seen as events which could not be offered by other parties in the City and beyond.

NC asked if a range of surveys might be sent to Alumni. It was agreed that this would be helpful. The Alumni Relations team has the ability to send both general surveys and also others to specifically targeted groups.

Reunions were discussed. These are often for classes/schools but might evolve into larger and more general events.

Please see also slides from CL's presentation to the General Council at the meeting on Saturday 6 December 25. These are in a 10 December 2025 email from Ross Anderson.

JA described a project in which he is currently involved which it is hoped will result in increased engagement with younger Alumni. This is ongoing, but he mentioned various initiatives including targeting new graduates within their first few years of leaving the University and the use of short and focused 'pulse surveys' issued at key points to gauge interest.

The need was stressed to be proactive in engaging with students who are, or have been, studying remotely to ensure that these individuals feel a greater sense of engagement with the University.

It was proposed that their physical presence in Old Aberdeen at least once per year should, wherever possible, be encouraged.

Key points for the Convenor and for future action

Chapters

Dan Montgomery and Derek Duthie will make enquiries about possible interest in Aberdeen and the North East, where there are significant numbers of graduates of all ages. Contact might be made with representatives of Chapters elsewhere to enquire about establishing groups and ensuring that proposals for their organisation, activities and events would be most likely to ensure success. Christian Haerpfer mentioned the Royal Northern & University Club. We discussed whether in reality it is such in name only. It was felt, nevertheless, that the Club might be interested in playing a role; many members are Aberdeen graduates and facilities would provide a highly appropriate venue for a variety of events. As previously recorded, DM had his own successful reunion there in September 2025. Establishing contact with the London Chapter is underway thanks to two of the Sub-Committee members.

BC presence at events

We are confident that BC members would be interested in providing a BC presence at a wide range of events in addition to graduations, the Christmas service and Founders' Day. We suggested that the appropriate departments and individuals at the University consider providing the BC with a calendar of events and issuing targeted invitations to the BC wherever appropriate.

BC contributions to Aberdeen/social media etc

Some deadlines for the submission of materials are fixed and others are very flexible. The BC might have a named individual whose role is to maintain contact with Alumni Relations and to prepare and submit contributions on a regular basis with a view to encourage greater awareness of the General Council and Business Committee.

Digital Platform

As mentioned above, this is a long-term and potentially expensive project. Desirable but thorough investigation of costs and benefits would be required before Alumni Relations put this forward as a concrete proposal. The Business Committee might be involved in supporting this proposal if it meets with our approval.

Contact with Chapters elsewhere and encouraging involvement locally

Ongoing as above.

Connecting recent graduates with those more established in locations globally

This is particularly desirable for recent online graduates

The establishment of a mentorship programme for Alumni was proposed, building on work done on the currently available mentorship scheme for undergraduates. This would reinforce the connection to the University and benefit graduates in their professional lives.

Contact with those studying remotely

The difficulties encountered by students undertaking online courses was discussed. Such students have little or no person-to-person contact with the University and few opportunities to engage properly with fellow students or staff or to experience all that the campus and city have to offer. It is entirely possible that, for some, their one and only visit to the campus may be for graduation. Encouraging such students to maintain contact after graduation must be particularly problematic.

Mentoring and Internships etc

Business Committee /General Council members and their contacts are in a strong position to assist, as has been discussed on several occasions.

Principal's Excellence Awards

In past years, only University staff and students have been invited to submit nominations. DM noted that the invitation to the BC to be involved has been welcomed and passed on our thanks. It is known that BC members have a few nominees in mind. The timescale this year means that it will not be possible for the BC to agree on one, or two, possible nominations. FU stressed that nominations for individuals will be welcomed, particularly on this first occasion when we have been involved. It was agreed, in discussion involving the Convener, that nominations will have to be by individuals on this occasion but that discussion on a strategy for 2027 nominations will be a Business Committee agenda item later in 2026.

DM

Vice-Convener, Business Committee,

April 2026

Voting arrangements for General Council on Saturday, 16th May 2026

As per the standing orders for the Business Committee, appointments are made by ballot where there are more candidates than vacancies. **There are 23 candidates for eight vacancies.**

In accordance with other elections within the University of Aberdeen, the ballot will operate under the 'Single Transferable Vote' (STV) system.

The Single Transferable Vote system of voting asks you to vote for your preferred candidate by placing them as your first choice. You are then asked to rank additional candidates in order of your preference, up to a maximum of seven.

At the end of the first counting of votes, if a candidate has received 50 per cent plus one of the total votes cast, they shall be declared elected.

If no candidate has an overall majority, then the candidate with the least votes shall be eliminated and each of their votes will be transferred to whichever candidate has been listed second in order of preference. These transferred votes shall each count as one full vote.

This process shall be repeated until either eight candidates obtain 50 per cent plus one of the total votes cast, or there are only eight candidates left who have not been eliminated, in which case the eight candidates with the most votes shall be declared as elected.

In the event of an equality of votes for two or more candidates at any stage of the count then the candidate to be excluded shall be decided by the relative placing of the candidates at the most recent stage of the count at which their votes were unequal.

Voting will take place on ballot papers for those attending the meeting in person and via Microsoft Forms for those online. Only those who have registered to attend the meeting, and have been verified as eligible to vote, will have access to the voting form.

For online voters, the MS Form includes three questions:

- The first question asks for your full name.
- The second and third questions list all candidates in alphabetical order by surname.

Due to form limitations, the 23 candidates are split across questions two and three. When completing the form, please ensure you assign only one 1st preference, one 2nd preference, and so on **across both questions** (Questions 2 and 3).

For example, if you select your 1st preference in question two, please do not select another 1st preference in question three, as this would be considered a duplicate vote and would not be counted. Please do not duplicate preferences across questions 2 and 3.

Due to the hybrid nature of voting, the University's Governance & Executive Support Team will count the votes cast during the week commencing Monday, 18th May.

Appointments will be confirmed as soon as practicable after the count and verification has taken place.

Once verified, the election outcome cannot be challenged.

Supporting Statements

Dr. Roy Bitrus

I am writing to express my sincere interest in joining the University of Aberdeen General Council Business Committee and contributing to the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy. As a proud Aberdeen alumnus and PhD graduate in Geology, my time at the University was foundational in shaping my leadership, entrepreneurial mindset, and commitment to translating research into real-world impact.

During my studies, I served as President of the AAPG Student Chapter and the first pioneer President of the Nigerian Student Society, developing cross-cultural leadership skills directly relevant to the Committee's inclusive and international ambitions. I was shortlisted and selected for the Durham/NERC IAPETUS Enterprise Management School and the IEAGHG International CCS Summer School at the University of Texas at Austin, achieving multiple certificates, and co-founded a startup within the University's ecosystem; giving me practical insight into how the University can better support graduate entrepreneurship and innovation commercialisation.

Subsequently, I served as Leadership Coordinator and Co-Chair of AFBE-UK Scotland, was awarded the Royal Society of Edinburgh Unlocking Ambition Enterprise Fellowship, won the OGTC TechX Programme, and the Venture Cup Denmark competition; a combination of leadership, diversity advocacy, and entrepreneurial achievement that I believe positions me well to contribute meaningfully to the Committee's work.

Professionally, I lead technology sourcing, sales, business development, and market entry across oil and gas, carbon management, and energy transition spanning the UK, MENA and West Africa. I have represented Scotland on the Scotland-UAE Trade Mission, contributed to three patent applications including a joint global patent with ADNOC in CCS, and my company was honoured with the 2024 EIC Export Company of the Year Award. I also provide strategic advisory services to OEMs, SMEs, and startups, an experience that includes structuring investment and growth strategies that have led to successful acquisitions, and which I believe directly equips me to support the Committee in advancing the University's commercial partnerships, innovation commercialisation, and industry engagement agenda.

I am committed to bringing tangible value to the Business Committee, leveraging my global networks, commercialisation experience, and energy transition expertise to help the University build meaningful industry partnerships, drive innovation, and strengthen its international reach. Joining the General Council Business Committee would be both a privilege and a purposeful opportunity to give back to an institution foundational to everything I have built.

Jeongsun Juliet Cha

As a graduate of the University of Aberdeen, I am pleased to stand for election to the Business Committee of the General Council. I remain deeply appreciative of Aberdeen's academic foundation and am committed to advancing its global standing and strategic success.

With over 20 years in Asia-Pacific real estate investment research, I bring executive expertise in strategic analysis, stakeholder engagement, and evidence-based decision-making. As Head of Research & Strategy, Asia Pacific at QuadReal Property Group, I advise executive leadership and institutional investors on market strategy, capital allocation, and long-term planning across Asia-Pacific markets. Previously, as Director, Asia Pacific Insights and Intelligence at CBRE Investment Management, I shaped regional investment strategies and delivered board-level briefings, skills directly transferable to the Committee's advisory role.

The General Council strengthens ties between Aberdeen and its global alumni while guiding its future. I endorse Aberdeen 2040's pillars of inclusion, internationalisation, interdisciplinarity, and sustainability, informed by my cross-border experience.

I am eager to advance priorities in alumni engagement, commercialisation, and student employability through industry partnerships.

If elected, I offer international perspective, professional rigour, and dedication to sustaining Aberdeen's legacy while realising its ambitions.

Gladys Cleland

One of the best things about my time at Aberdeen was being class representative. I genuinely loved it. Sitting in Senate meetings, speaking up for my peers, and seeing that it actually made a difference. It showed me early on that universities don't just run themselves. The people who care about them have to show up and stay involved.

That's honestly why I put my name forward for the Business Committee.

My MSc in Global Health and Management gave me more than a degree. It taught me how to think across borders, across disciplines, and across sectors, connecting health, policy, agriculture, and commerce in ways that reflect the kind of interdisciplinary thinking Aberdeen 2040 champions. I'm based in Accra, Ghana now, working in economic and product research, helping bring responsibly produced Ghanaian agricultural products to international markets and health policy advocacy. The path from Aberdeen's Global Health programme to what I'm doing in West Africa feels very direct to me. It's not a coincidence. Aberdeen shaped how I see the world.

I'm also drawn to all three sub-committees. On Alumni Engagement, I know firsthand how much it means to a prospective student from Africa to hear from someone who has actually lived the Aberdeen experience. In November 2025, I spoke at a webinar hosted by the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition for postgraduate applicants, and the response genuinely moved me.

On Student Employability, I want to help students, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, translate their Aberdeen education into meaningful careers globally. And on Commercialisation, my current work developing international markets for sustainable agricultural products gives me practical insight into how research and enterprise connect in the real world.

Inclusion runs through all of this. Aberdeen's commitment to being open to all resonates deeply with me as an international alumna from Ghana who benefited from exactly that openness.

The Business Committee has real influence. I want to contribute meaningfully, not just attend meetings.

Aberdeen shaped who I am. I'd love the chance to give something back.

Edward Debrah

I seek election to the Business Committee to support delivery of the University of Aberdeen's 2040 strategy, with a strong focus on inclusion, internationalisation, interdisciplinarity and sustainability.

I am committed to fostering an environment where diversity is valued and all students are supported to succeed, while strengthening global engagement to ensure graduates are equipped with the cultural awareness and adaptability required in an interconnected world.

I will champion interdisciplinary collaboration to address complex challenges, encouraging cross-school initiatives and applied learning that develop broader skill sets and real-world problem-solving capabilities. In parallel, I will advocate for embedding sustainability across teaching and the student experience, ensuring that environmental responsibility and long-term thinking are integral to decision-making and future careers.

Strengthening alumni engagement will be a key priority. The University's global alumni network is a valuable resource that can be further mobilised to support mentoring, networking and career development. Enhancing connections between alumni and students, particularly those in their final year to support create clear pathways into employment.

I also recognize the strategic importance of commercialisation in driving innovation and impact. Supporting student enterprise, industry collaboration and knowledge exchange will help translate academic work into practical outcomes that benefit both students and the wider economy.

Improving student employability underpins my approach. I have mentored final-year students, helping them develop job-ready skills, confidence and career direction. This contribution was recognised through a Certificate of Participation. I hope to build on this by promoting structured mentoring opportunities that bridges academic learning and employer expectations.

Through these priorities, I hope to bring a practical and outcomes-focused approach, contributing to student success while advancing the University's ambitions for a sustainable, inclusive and globally engaged future.

Samuel David Downes

As an alumnus having worked within local and international software companies across Scotland, Europe and North America, I understand firsthand the challenges facing the university, students and employers in the current economic landscape.

Of particular interest then and still today, is the question of student employability. A significant part of my final year was spent working closely with local businesses, understanding their needs from students and how the university could better support the graduate pool. My dissertation, "The value of university-acquired skills to employers", interviewed 38 local employers and revealed that transferable skills and work experience consistently outweigh academic credentials in hiring decisions.

This reinforced my conviction that employability - amongst other key topics - must sit at the heart of university strategy and this type of evidence-based approach to stakeholder engagement is precisely what the Business Committee needs when advising the Court and Senate on strategic issues like graduate outcomes and regional economic impact. I continue this focus by offering career mentoring at various universities and advising new ventures at the University of East Anglia.

Further to this, my professional experience at the intersection of commercial and product strategy has equipped me to manage conflicting priorities and represent various stakeholder interests. This experience translates directly to the Committee's responsibility for monitoring university affairs and ensuring the General Council's interests are represented in senior decision-making.

Concretely, my work aligns with Aberdeen 2040's four pillars:

- Inclusive: Supporting all graduates to reach full potential through employability-focused initiatives
- Interdisciplinary: Strengthening academia-industry partnerships, including mandatory placement years
- International: Leveraging my cross-border experience to enhance global education and multicultural engagement
- Sustainable: Generating resources through stronger graduate outcomes and employer relationships

Whilst I have thrived on being the Voice of the Customer in my various professional roles, today I wish to champion the voice of the General Council to shape decisions that positively affect all students, graduates and staff.

Alan Eddie

My four years as an undergraduate at the University of Aberdeen were profoundly formative, establishing a foundation of rigorous inquiry that has guided my professional journey. The relationships forged during that time remain a cornerstone of my personal and professional life. Since graduating, my career has spanned several countries and diverse industries, beginning with my initial role as a Petroleum Engineer in Aberdeen.

Currently, I serve as a partner at a US-based consulting firm. For the past year, I have acted as the Chief Technology Officer for an organization specializing in educational assessment for students aged 3–18, overseeing the technical frameworks that support cognitive development, mental health, and student resiliency.

My leadership as a CTO involves navigating the complex integration of emerging technologies—specifically the ethical and structural implications of AI—while managing organizational growth and board-level communications. As a strategically minded executive, I prioritize working collaboratively within senior leadership teams to manage complex, multi-stakeholder environments.

On a personal note, my children were born in London and raised in the United States, where they graduated from various colleges across the country; as a family, we are now dual passport holders. Over the last two years, I have strengthened my ties to the University, meeting with senior members including Principal & Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Edwards and Interim Director of Advancement Clare Livingston in New York, and serving on the Interdisciplinary Institute External Advisory Board last November.

My motivation for applying is to offer my experience in stewardship to the University as it navigates these particularly volatile, complex, and uncertain times. It would be a profound honour to give back my time and effort to an institution to which I owe so much.

The intersection of technological shifts, financial constraints, and demographic and political changes requires a governance approach that marries commercial acumen with a deep respect for the University's academic mission. I believe I possess the competencies to be an effective partner on the Business Committee, utilising my varied experiences and executive background to help the University achieve its vital objectives and long-term mission.

Julie Gallacher

A Scottish alumna with over 30 years' experience leading consumer brands including Black & Decker, McVitie's, Nestlé Nespresso and Chivas Brothers, the Scotch whisky business of Pernod Ricard. My career began in marketing and over the past decade, has pivoted to sustainability.

I studied at Aberdeen University from 1979 to 1983 and was actively involved in university life, living in both halls and off campus. I was elected to the Students' Union Management Committee in 1980 and served for two years, gaining valuable insight into how the University and its students work together.

As an alumna of the University of Aberdeen, I am motivated to give back and inspired by the University's long-term Aberdeen 2040 ambitions, particularly its focus on interdisciplinary collaboration and sustainability. I bring a combination of commercial perspective, strategic thinking, stakeholder engagement and practical delivery which I hope would add value to the Business Committee's priority areas.

My work in sustainability relies on collaboration across disciplines, sectors and communities to address challenges that require collective action. This has included launching an industry-wide coffee pod recycling scheme Podback and more recently, developing a partnership with River Trusts to support river restoration in North East Scotland. These experiences have reinforced my belief that meaningful progress is driven by people working together to deliver change well.

If elected, I would aim to contribute across the Business Committee's priorities - supporting stronger alumni engagement by helping build active, lifelong connections with graduates; bringing a commercial and brand-led perspective to discussions on commercialisation; and championing student employability to ensure students develop the skills, experiences and networks needed to thrive in a changing world.

My connection to Scotland is both professional and personal with family in Edinburgh and Elgin, and childhood holidays spent in Tomintoul. It motivates me that my work contributes to protecting the landscapes and communities that have shaped my life.

Alongside my professional experience, I chaired my local school PTA for four years, leading fundraising efforts and bringing people together to achieve shared goals.

I would value the opportunity to contribute collaboratively to the work of the Business Committee.

Emeritus Professor Hugh Galbraith

1. Re-nomination to Business Committee of the General Council (GCBC).

Reflections on first term of office commencing October 2023 and continuing interest in GCBC. Regular attendance at GCBC meetings, benefiting from experience gained in a long association with the University, from my base in Aberdeen, and career in college and university sectors. Regularly representing the Committee at graduations, Founder's Day and other events. Subjects of interest included sub-committee on Marischal College East, commercial provision on Campus, student recruitment, academic standards and funding of research.

Post-October 2025 – also service as chair of the Business Committee's sub-committee on commercialisation: Activities to date: formation of the sub-committee and utilising expertise of interested members; engagement with, and receipt of information from, University staff; evaluation of policy and initiatives designed to embed entrepreneurship in teaching and research. Analysis of examples of good practice from review of success elsewhere; production of initial recommendations.

2. **Biography.** Southern Hebridean islander (Argyllshire), educated at Oban High School, Strathclyde University (BSc (Hons: Biochemistry) and Aberdeen University (PhD; Biochemistry and microbiology). Currently, Emeritus Professor in School of Biological Sciences at Aberdeen University.

Employment and experience. Worked (1972-2010: in Aberdeen at the North of Scotland College of Agriculture (SRUC) followed by the Department of Agriculture/School of Biological Sciences (University). Subsequently (post-2010) by contract and consultancy in college and university sectors, locally, nationally and internationally. Interests include audit, quality standards and supportive working practices ("*Inclusion*").

For teaching: management, recruitment for, design and delivery of taught courses and provision of supervision for PhD programmes.

For research, recipient of funding from BBSRC, European Commission, commercial companies, Scottish Government and charities: includes, recent design of NERC-funded project for mitigation of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. ("*Sustainability*").

Selected publication outputs: In excess of 200, in refereed papers, book chapters and conference abstracts. Numerous contributions to scientific symposia internationally and collaborating with colleagues across disciplines. ("*Interdisciplinarity*").

External activities ("*Internationalisation*"). Contributor via British Council, Erasmus and commercial finance, to lecture programmes and collaborative research projects across Europe, North and South America and China. Assessor for grant-awarding bodies.

Current membership of learned societies: British and Irish Society for Animal Science, European Federation of Animal Sciences and Textile Fibre Working Group.

Chris Hill

As a proud alumnus of the University of Aberdeen, I am keen to give back by contributing my experience and perspective to the Business Committee of the General Council of Aberdeen University. My career has been shaped by more than 25 years working at the intersection of industry, innovation and public purpose, spanning senior executive and non-executive roles in offshore renewables, infrastructure and technology-led organisations.

A particularly formative period was my time on the Executive Leadership Team of the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, where I worked closely with universities — including academics, research groups and technology transfer teams — to translate research excellence into real-world impact. That experience gave me a strong appreciation of the value of academia–industry collaboration, and of the role universities play in convening talent, ideas and partnerships.

These experiences are directly relevant to the Business Committee’s current areas of focus. In supporting Raising Engagement with Alumni, I am motivated by my own positive connection to Aberdeen and would welcome the opportunity to help strengthen alumni relationships in ways that benefit students, staff and the University’s long-term ambitions — including mentoring, employability pathways and strategic engagement with alumni in leadership roles.

On Commercialisation, I have extensive experience working with SMEs, scale-ups and academic partners to support technology development, innovation funding, joint ventures and investment readiness. I am particularly interested in how the University can further support the journey from research to commercial and societal impact, aligned with its strengths in energy transition, data and interdisciplinary research.

Finally, in relation to Student Employability, I have spent much of my career building links between education and fast-evolving industries. I am keen to support initiatives that better prepare graduates for global careers, and that connect students with employers, entrepreneurs and alumni in meaningful, practical ways.

These contributions align strongly with the University’s Aberdeen 2040 commitments, particularly its emphasis on partnership, interdisciplinarity, sustainability and equipping graduates to thrive in a changing world. I would be delighted to bring my experience, energy and alumni perspective to the Business Committee.

Professor Andrew Hurst

“Every cloud has a silver lining” describes my psychology. Perhaps the darker the clouds the greater the opportunity; the best way for the University of Aberdeen to survive is to nurture green shoots of growth. My story is science, consciously heading for unreachable horizons that propels me to enhance knowledge and understanding. I hold the Chair of Energy Geoscience (since 1992) and a Blaustein Professorship at Stanford University. My first taste of the university was UG Geology (1973-1977), the institution has an indelible presence in my life.

Raising Engagement with Alumni Clear institutional vision is essential to support healthy alumni relations. In 1998, I founded the Aberdeen Geological Alumni (AGA), which then, was the only discipline-focused alumni organisation in UA. It ran social events for students, alumni and staff; £1,000's was raised annually and invested in student academic support. AGA failed to regenerate because young alumni were unwilling to commit. I suspect that discipline-focused alum groups have potential to generate high levels of interest & philanthropic support and will complement, rather than rely upon Institutional initiatives. *Inversion* - requests for funding for graduation, can invert to a request for philanthropic support, a silver lining.

Commercialisation Organisational commercialisation is best developed by creating a balanced portfolio of opportunities and assigning them realistic probabilities of success – a basis for growth. Low risk, low reward projects, which are easier to realise than high reward projects, have collective value and yield high success rates. High reward projects have significantly lower probability of success and in abundance should be a minor part of a balanced portfolio. This is commonplace practice in business, but I am unaware of the University working in this manner.

Student Employability Excellence in education and research are enshrined in the academic process. Regrettably, education has become a commodity, subject to inflation and expensive. As educators, academics must engage with graduates' lives beyond academia, not necessarily through highlighting career applications but, by making explicit how curiosity and interrogation of subject matter translate into areas beyond the specific discipline being taught. A UG degree demonstrates a level of ability that qualifies graduates to embark on a range of career opportunities. Having not been on a *life sentence* in academia, I discovered that as an academic, I could touch students' lives, both a privilege and a responsibility.

Esteves José Oliveira Júnior

My name is Esteves José Oliveira Júnior, from Mozambique, an alumnus of the University of Aberdeen with a Master's in Natural Resources Law, currently Managing Partner at my own law firm Esteves Oliveira Júnior Advogados with strong expertise on natural resources, contract negotiation and clean energy.

As a member of Business Committee, I will be specially committed to three specific areas very close to my heart which are inclusion by protecting the most vulnerable groups, internationalisation by promoting an even more diverse attendance of international students and sustainability by campaigning for business practices safeguarded on strong environmental standards and net zero targets, the delivery of this goals will be supported by my international background and hands-on experience.

As an alumnus, I have noticed that the engagement between the alumni and the University needs support to create a collaborative relation which will impact directly on the commercialisation and student employability as many alumni are well positioned on business and professional level. My contribution under business committee will be oriented by the strongest ethical standards and fairness principles, avoiding any kind of discriminatory and unethical practices. Looking forward to serving and supporting an even more relevant Business Committee.

Dr. Andronikos Kafas

I am an alumnus of the University of Aberdeen and currently a commercial manager in offshore renewable energy at Shell, working at the forefront of Europe's energy transition. I am motivated to contribute to the General Council Business Committee by bringing a combination of academic depth, international perspective, and commercial delivery experience.

Inclusion has been central to my personal journey. Coming from Southern Europe, I was the first in my family to pursue higher education, completing a BSc and later a PhD. This experience shaped my belief in widening access, supporting diverse pathways, and ensuring that talent - regardless of background - can thrive within the University community.

Internationalisation is a defining feature of my career. I have successfully secured and managed research funding from European and UK institutions, including Horizon 2020, INTERREG, Innovate UK, and NERC. I have worked with international organisations such as ICES, the European Commission (DG MARE), and UNESCO, and have led or contributed to offshore wind business case development across six European countries. This exposure enables me to support the University's global positioning and partnerships.

Interdisciplinarity underpins my academic and professional work. My PhD integrated biological and social sciences, reflecting the complex interface between environmental systems and human decision-making - an approach I continue to apply in large-scale infrastructure and policy-driven energy projects.

Sustainability is at the core of my professional focus. I work in renewable energy development, directly contributing to decarbonisation and long-term environmental resilience.

Within the Committee's sub-committees, I would be particularly well placed to support Student Employability. Alongside my commercial responsibilities, I have recruited and mentored early-career professionals and graduates, giving me direct insight into the skills, expectations, and gaps between academia and industry. I am committed to helping the University strengthen pathways from education to meaningful employment.

Pingkun Li

Having reviewed the University of Aberdeen's 2040 Strategic Plan, my most immediate takeaway is that our university, with a profound heritage spanning more than 500 years, has not defined its future with empty slogans. Instead, anchored in the four core themes of inclusion, interdisciplinarity, internationalisation and sustainability, it has translated its founding ethos of "open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in service of others" into a series of actionable, verifiable concrete initiatives.

Each of the four themes has its distinct focus while complementing and reinforcing one another. Inclusion is the foundational bedrock of the university's educational mission: it upholds a commitment to equitable and flexible admission pathways, a comprehensive diversity support system, and the elimination of all forms of pay gaps, truly opening the doors of education to individuals from all backgrounds. Interdisciplinarity lies at the heart of innovation: it breaks down disciplinary silos, addressing real-world social and industrial challenges through cross-boundary teaching and research.

Internationalisation shapes the university's global development vision: it transcends geographical boundaries, provides every student with access to global exchange opportunities, and tackles humanity's shared challenges through global collaboration.

Sustainability embodies the university's responsibility to the future: it sets a firm, binding target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2040 and deeply embeds the ethos of sustainability into the entire lifecycle of its education and research endeavours.

As an alumnus who graduated 20 years ago, I feel deeply honoured to have the opportunity to witness my alma mater's unwavering perseverance and conviction spanning more than 530 years alongside the university community, as well as to behold its immensely promising future. I hope to have the opportunity to become a member of the Business Committee and contribute my humble efforts to the University of Aberdeen.

Emeritus Professor Lorna McKee

Motivation

I studied social sciences at Trinity College Dublin and a DPhil in Sociology at the University of York. I am now Emeritus Professor at the University of Aberdeen with deep cultural knowledge and leadership experience working across two key Schools: Business and Medicine and Life Sciences. I understand the changes facing the university sector and the need for clear governance and strategic direction. I have an established background researching the shaping and implementation of organisational change and would bring these insights to the Business Committee, informing delivery of the 2040 strategy.

Relevant Experience

My career has a strong entrepreneurial drive prioritising interdisciplinary working and collaborative research with medicine, other clinical specialties, humanities, and business studies. I have forged links with external organisations, focussing on partnership and impact. Seminal applied research has attracted significant research funding, advisory and governance roles: with NHS Grampian, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, CSO, NIHR, MRC, Irish Health Research Board, EU Marie Curie, ESRC.

I am outward-facing and well-connected to many organisations, both academic and non-academic, working with a wide range of national and international colleagues, achieving funding from RSE for visiting experts from the Universities of Michigan and Cologne. I have hosted international conferences and am International Expert Advisor for the University of Hong Kong Business School on RAE submissions in 2021 and 2026. I have been external advisor on Impact Cases, contributing to REF submissions of several UK Business Schools.

At Aberdeen I have held leadership roles: as Head of Department, Director of Research and Programme Director. I have Chaired a Scottish Government Oversight Group on the sensitive subject of Transvaginal Mesh. This involved public or patient representation, navigating conflicts of interest. I am enthusiastic and energetic, committed to the future of the University of Aberdeen and keen to make a difference through the Business Committee. I am a qualified Executive Coach and Leadership Mentor with senior women academics, supporting their career development and advancement. My commitment to inclusivity, EDI and communication skills would add value, with a sensitivity to managing staff well-being through change.

Ewan McKenzie

As a double graduate of the University of Aberdeen, I am proud to be nominated to serve on the General Council Business Committee. The University's 2040 commitments – advancing inclusion, internationalisation, interdisciplinarity and sustainability – align closely with my values and experience. I am motivated to give back by supporting effective governance, strong stewardship, and engagement with students, staff, alumni and partners worldwide.

In my role as Group & External Reporting Manager at Shell, I provide assured sustainability and HSSE performance insights for senior governance audiences, including the Shell Executive Committee and Board. This demands analytical rigour, clarity and transparency, and the confidence to offer independent challenge so decisions are grounded in evidence and accountability – capabilities relevant to committee scrutiny and to sustaining credible progress.

During my secondment as Climate Director at Ipieca, I led a global community of climate professionals and worked with UN bodies, regulators, investors, NGOs and academic partners, including through UNFCCC processes and wider policy forums. Working across cultures and disciplines strengthened my ability to build consensus, translate complex evidence into action, and represent institutional perspectives credibly – experience that supports the University's international outlook and interdisciplinary ways of working.

I also bring a commitment to public service and place-based impact. Earlier in my career I supported environmental and sustainable development initiatives in Scotland, including work with Dundee City Council and research with the University's Arkleton Institute. I believe universities thrive when they widen opportunity, listen to diverse communities, and create inclusive environments where people from different backgrounds can succeed.

If appointed, I would contribute sound judgement, diligent preparation and constructive challenge in the University's long-term interests. In particular, I would be drawn to focus on: inclusive and transparent decision-making; strengthening international, alumni and stakeholder engagement; enabling cross-disciplinary collaboration with external partners; and maintaining robust sustainability governance and accountability.

I would be honoured to support the General Council and the University of Aberdeen through service on the Business Committee, and I would be grateful for your support.

Dr. Helen Martin

Since joining the University in 2002, I have been leading the mathematics education teams and more recently Masters and Professional doctorate courses. Prior to this I was a teacher and then Assistant Principal Teacher across various secondary schools in the North-east of Scotland having graduated with a BSc (Hons) Mathematics from St Andrews, a PGCE from Edinburgh and PhD from Aberdeen.

Across both the secondary and higher education sectors I have had the pleasure to introduce outreach programmes such as Royal Institution Maths Masterclasses, UKMT, Scottish Mathematical Challenge, Primary Enterprising Maths Challenge where the last two were initiated here in Aberdeen.

Throughout the priority has always been to inspire people, whether pupils, students or teachers, to see themselves as mathematicians. I have served as an elected senator (2017–2020) and am currently a member of Court (2020–2026). Throughout these, my priorities are building inclusive communities with outreach to local schools, supporting student experience and employability, improving trust and reciprocity where diversity is valued.

Professor Martin Mills

Professor Martin A. Mills (MA Hons, St. Andrews, PhD Edinburgh) is Chair of Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen and has been a member of staff at the University of Aberdeen for twenty-six years, having previously taught at the Universities of Sussex, Edinburgh and St. Andrews.

An anthropologist and Tibet specialist by trade, he first arrived at Aberdeen in 2000 to help build the new Religious Studies programme, but moved back to his home discipline of Anthropology in 2010.

A long-standing elected Member of Senate for the School of Social Sciences (and before that the School of Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History), he has also served two terms as elected Staff Governor to Court, and in his more citizenly capacity served for fourteen years as parliamentary secretary to the Cross-Party Group on Tibet in Holyrood, and writes regularly on university matters for the *Times Higher Education Supplement*.

Martin has had an active collegiate profile in the University over the last fifteen years in particular, largely as an offshoot of his enduring professional and research interest in knowledge economies. He believes, following Aristotle, that the basis of all good is knowledge, and therefore that a university, well-served and correctly purposed, is one of the great goods of this world. To serve such an institution and help it achieve its goals is thus an opportunity of great good fortune for anyone.

Lucky Ogutu Okudo

I am honoured to submit my candidacy for re-election to serve a second term on the Business Committee. The Committee has been a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the University's strategic direction and continued global relevance. In my current term, I have had the privilege of supporting the work of the newly constituted Sub-Committee for Commercialisation. This role is particularly important to me, as it aligns closely with the ambitions set out in the Aberdeen 2040 strategy—strengthening the University's ability to translate research, innovation, and partnerships into tangible impact and sustainable growth.

My connection to the University is both professional and deeply personal. Since graduating in 2015 with a Master's degree in Oil and Gas Enterprise Management, I have frequented the University campus for several graduations. The past decade I have built my career within the energy sector, working across markets and contributing to conversations around the future of energy. My work reflects a commitment to balancing traditional energy systems with emerging renewable opportunities, an area that I believe is central to the University's heritage and future positioning. As a Kenyan energy strategist and board executive focused on the intersection of energy infrastructure, digital transformation, and capital deployment across Africa. My experience spans petroleum, renewable energy, and policy reform in Sub-Saharan Africa, advising governments, investors, and institutions on energy access and security, infrastructure development, and the systems required to support Africa's emerging AI-powered economy.

I remain passionate about contributing to the University's evolution as a globally relevant institution, particularly in areas of energy transition leadership, commercialisation, and strategic partnerships. A second term on the Business Committee would allow me to continue building on the work already underway and to further support the University in delivering on its Aberdeen 2040 vision.

I would be honoured to continue serving and contributing to the future of the University of Aberdeen.

Dr. Lulu Silas Olan'g

I am excited to present my candidacy for the University of Aberdeen Business Committee of the General Council. As an economist, educator, and researcher, I am interested in serving on the business committee because of a crucial yet straightforward question: *how can we ensure that higher education remains relevant in a rapidly changing world?*

I have a deep appreciation for the strengths of our higher education strategies and the competition we face. We find ourselves in an era marked by swift technological, economic, and social changes. In this context, a significant challenge for universities is to ensure that students don't graduate feeling that what they've learned is disconnected from the real-world situations they encounter beyond the classroom. I firmly believe that institutions like the University of Aberdeen have a vital role to play, not just as hubs of knowledge but as spaces where learning is consistently linked to practice, purpose, and society.

I draw inspiration from the University of Aberdeen's 2040 strategy, which resonates with my education and professional experiences, particularly its focus on inclusion and internationalization. The university's dedication to embracing diverse perspectives and ideas from around the world, along with its commitment to providing every student with international opportunities and advancing transnational education, aligns closely with my values.

Since graduating, my career has evolved to encompass both academia and applied policy research, including projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and currently in Central Asia, where I have concentrated on economic development, sustainability, and governance. These experiences have reinforced my belief that knowledge must be actionable, globally relevant, and responsive to the needs of society. Having built a career across different cultures, I eagerly anticipate engaging in discussions that draw lessons from the Global South, ensuring our graduates remain among the most employable and adaptable in any environment, while also exploring ways to better support early-career researchers.

I will bring a collaborative, thoughtful, and forward-looking mindset to the Committee, driven by the belief that universities, students, and alumni must work hand in hand to co-create enriching, relevant, and engaging learning environments. I would truly appreciate your support.

Dr. Sadik Omairey

The University of Aberdeen's Aberdeen 2040 commitments set a clear and ambitious direction built on inclusion, interdisciplinarity, internationalisation, and sustainability. I am motivated to contribute to the Business Committee by bringing experience that supports these priorities through practical, industry-informed, and globally connected perspectives.

In supporting interdisciplinary collaboration, my work operates at the intersection of engineering, advanced materials, and digital technologies, with a particular focus on composite systems for energy infrastructure, automotive, and aerospace. As part of my work in Brunel Composites Centre, I have led and contributed to projects that combine experimental research, computational modelling, and real-world engineering applications, enabling collaboration across disciplines and between academia and industry. This approach supports the development of innovative, challenge-led solutions aligned with industrial needs and societal challenges.

Aligned with the University's international ambitions, I bring experience of working across the UK, the Middle East, and China, alongside active engagement in global research and professional communities. As a Scottish-born graduate with international roots, I value connecting local identity with global collaboration. I have been invited to contribute to international conferences and to serve as a session chair and committee member, supporting knowledge exchange and strengthening international partnerships.

Supporting student employability and industry engagement is a key area where I can add value. As a Chartered Engineer (CEng) and Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (FIMechE), and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA), I actively contribute to professional development, accreditation, and mentoring. Through these roles, and through the Non-Metallic Engineers Exchange (NmeX) that I founded, I support early-career engineers, promote industry-aligned skills, and help bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice.

My work also aligns strongly with the University's sustainability commitments, particularly in advancing materials and engineering solutions for energy transition, infrastructure resilience, and long-term performance.

Having benefited from the University's support during my studies, including the Elphinstone Scholarship, I am committed to giving back by contributing to its continued development and long-term impact. If elected, I will actively support initiatives that strengthen alumni engagement, enhance industry collaboration, and contribute to shaping a forward-looking, globally competitive University.

Shaleen Sharma

The University of Aberdeen has held a special place in my academic, professional and personal journey. When I decided to pursue postgraduate study abroad, I had offers from institutions across the UK, but Aberdeen remained my first choice. Coming from an energy law background, I was drawn to the University's strong standing in energy, law and sustainability. Looking back, I can say with pride and gratitude that Aberdeen has truly lived up to its reputation, while preserving its values as one of the world's oldest universities through its forward-looking Aberdeen 2040 strategy.

As a Master of Laws graduate in Energy Transition Law, and now as a third-generation lawyer working towards requalification as a Scottish Solicitor, I have benefited immensely from the University's academic environment, supportive staff and welcoming student community. Beyond academics, my time at Aberdeen has shaped me personally, helping me become more humble, respectful and grounded, while deepening my appreciation for kindness, community and service. My experience living at Hillhead also gave me a strong sense of belonging to the wider University family.

I have been fortunate enough to contribute to the University in several capacities. As a Summer Intern with the Sustainability Team in Estates and Facilities, I led research and drafting work on the University's first Sustainability Design Guide, supporting the integration of sustainability into estates and facilities work in line with Aberdeen 2040. Further, I am honoured to have received the AUSA Sustainability Volunteer of the Year Award 2024-25 for my broader contributions as a Sustainability Advocate on campus.

Additionally, as LLM Batch Representative 2024-25, I proposed the School of Law's inaugural LLM PGT Conference 2025 and later served as its Project Manager. It has since been incorporated into the School's programme, strengthening my commitment to engagement, collaboration and responsible leadership.

If elected to the General Business Committee, I would be committed to giving back to the institution I proudly call my own, supporting its mission 'open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others', and representing its alumni and wider community with sincerity, diligence and integrity.

JiaYan Shi

As an Aberdeen LLM graduate based in Chengdu, China, I bring active alumni leadership, cross-border professional networks, and community-building experience that can serve the Business Committee and advance Aberdeen 2040.

Alumni Engagement

I am a registered member of the alumni chapter and helped organise alumni gatherings in 2024 by sourcing venues, arranging photography, and setting up events. In 2025 I attended the NHS Grampian Research Conference at P&J Live, co-organised by the University, and established a working relationship with the commercial partnerships team. I also hold a TEDx licence and run TEDxWangjiang St in Chengdu, engaging over a hundred local communities and reaching an audience of thousands. Combined with my partnerships with local media outlets in Chengdu, this network can deepen the University's visibility and alumni connections across China and the wider Asia-Pacific region.

Student Employability

As a member of the Chengdu Bar Association, I provide legal advice locally and can offer career mentoring to Aberdeen's Chinese law students. I am also working to connect Chengdu-based law firms with the University to create remote internship placements. These placements create a pipeline from degree to employment that supports Aberdeen 2040's commitment to equipping graduates for global careers.

Commercialisation and International Reach

I am the founder of a US-based technology startup, with direct access to American investor networks and professional partnerships, including collaborations with US law firms. Through TEDx I maintain relationships with high-net-worth individuals and international education agencies in Chengdu. I additionally hold connections with the Southwest China British Chamber of Commerce, which organises annual events linking British universities with local industry; Aberdeen could be introduced as a participant through this channel.

Alignment with Aberdeen 2040

My background speaks to all four strategic themes.

- Inclusion: bridging cultures and welcoming diverse perspectives.
- Internationalisation: extending networks across China and the US.
- Interdisciplinarity: combining law, technology, and community organising.
- Sustainability: building lasting structures for alumni engagement and student opportunity rather than one-off initiatives.

I would be honoured to contribute this experience to the Business Committee and to help the University realise its 2040 vision.

Neil Stewart

As Universities become more corporate in their management and governance, the role of external experience in the Business Committee is an important and healthy point of scrutiny and challenge.

Universities, including Aberdeen, need to diversify from precarious dependency on international students, finding new research collaborations, getting departments to co-operate and innovate, finding new revenue from environmental, agricultural and renewables sources which surround Aberdeen. Scottish Universities face particular financial challenges. Universities need to find a new co production teaching and learning settlement with students.

What students can expect how they need to approach learning. Student experience was distorted in COVID – university outcomes need to be more than a jobs transaction over fees. University teaching and research staff need to have better, fairer career paths, valuing more the many skills and research paths academics and specialist staff contribute.

The University needs to engage fully with the city, its many businesses, and institutions, to transition from an oil and gas economy adapting high level skills to new industries for the city and its populace to prosper, equipping not just students, but playing a role with lifelong skills needed for the future.

Since graduating from Aberdeen, I have worked in higher education policy organisations across 40 years at UK government level, in parliament and with Universities UK. As an ex-NUS president, a senior officer for the Royal College of Nursing, transitioning nursing into HE, working on health economics and pay negotiations. Working with Universities UK on government engagement during the development of tuition fees and their alternatives. I have also worked in parliament as political secretary to the Leader of the Labour Party, including on devolution, and was even interviewed for General Secretary of the AUT, UCU's predecessor. I am the co-author of *Nurses Power and Politics 1986* and currently a Director of the Narrowcast Media Group and Editorial Director, Maternity & Midwifery Forum and its video teaching catalogue for universities - MATFLIX. I would like to bring this experience to the university that gave me such a good start in life.