UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of meeting held on 8 December 2015

Present: Ms M Chapman (in the Chair), Principal, Sir Moir Lockhead, Professor A Akisanya, Mr A Arthur, Professor C Black, Professor N Booth, Professor C Brittain, Miss M Burgoyne, Miss G Clarke (for part of meeting only), Mr C Duncan, Mr D Haywood, Professor S Heys, Professor N Hutchison, Professor J Kilburn, Mr D MacFarlane, Professor P McGeorge, Cllr R McKail, Mrs K McPhail, Ms A Minto, Mr K Murray, Dr N Oren, Mr B Pack, Mr B Paterson, Mrs J Shirreffs, and Mr D Steyn (teleconference).

In attendance: Mrs C Inglis, Mr D Beattie Mr A Donaldson, Mrs D Dyker (for part of meeting only), Mr L Forsyth, Professor I Guz (for minutes 69-70 and 119-123), Professor B MacGregor (for minutes 119-123), Dr H Sveinsdottir (for minutes 88-94 and 119-123), Very Rev Professor I Torrance, Mr N Qamar (for minutes 71-74), Professor R Wells (for minutes 119 to 129) and Mr B Purdon (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Hall, Professor P Hannaford and Cllr J Laing.

NEW MEMBERS

65 The Court welcomed Professor Akisanya and Mr Haywood to their first meetings as members of Court, and congratulated Professor Hutchison on his re-election as a Senate Assessor. The Court also noted that Professor Skakle had recently concluded her term as a Senate Assessor and agreed to record its appreciation of the contribution she had made to the work of the Court.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

66 The following declarations of interest were noted:

Mr A Arthur – Officer of the University of Aberdeen Branch of the University and College Union (UCU);
Mr B Paterson – Officer of the University of Aberdeen Branch of Unite the Union;

MINUTES

67 The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2015 were approved.

68 The Court also noted the updated Action Log (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

PRESENTATION ON THE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

69 The Court received a presentation on the School of Engineering from Professor Guz, Head of the School. The presentation highlighted the School’s ambition for the future and its plans for growth, its current positive financial position, its staffing profile, research activities, an overview of its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and some of the School’s international activities.

70 In discussion, the School’s focus on subsea energy work was welcomed and it was noted that programmes related to renewable energy had been introduced in response to the increasing global significance of this area. The potential impact of the decrease in the oil price on student recruitment was noted, although the School was confident that not all potential international student markets would be affected by this. The Court discussed the School’s plans for growth and noted that any further growth than currently planned would require
investment in both facilities and staff. The Court also welcomed the School’s commitment to supporting the career development of junior academic staff.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

UPDATE ON ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

71 The Court received and considered a paper (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) which provided details of one injury which was reportable to the Health and Safety Executive. The Court also received a report of the Operating Board’s consideration of the incident.

72 The Court noted that the incident related to a member of staff who had tripped while exiting an NHS building and had fractured an ankle. The Court noted that the incident was primarily caused by the member of staff being distracted but that the University had reviewed the area of steps concerned and that the findings had been reported to the NHS, which had subsequently made adjustments to the level of the steps.

73 The Court also received details of three ‘near miss’ incidents and the follow up actions that the University had taken in response to these which were:

- A contractor gained access and carried out work in the Japp lab in the Meston Building without notification and no Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- A student rode on a car bonnet in a busy car park while the driver drove at speed creating a circular skidding pattern; and
- A staff member fell on steps in ‘pitch black’ conditions.

PRESENTATION ON ‘BECAUSE WE CARE’ CAMPAIGN

74 The Court received a presentation from the Director of Health, Safety & Wellbeing, on the University’s ‘Because We Care’ Campaign which would focus on a range of activities during the academic year to promote a higher level of understanding and commitment to health, safety and wellbeing, including a campaign to encourage reporting of hazards, near misses and suggestions to improve health, safety and wellbeing.

STANDING REPORTS

REPORT FROM THE RECTOR

75 The Rector noted the success of the recent Winter Graduation ceremonies and expressed her thanks to all who had been involved in these.

76 The Rector highlighted the recent Kirking of the Students’ Association event which had taken place during Inter-faith Week and which had been very successful.

77 The Rector also noted the excellent work that the Students’ Association was leading in relation to a variety of student support initiatives and activities.

REPORT FROM THE SENIOR GOVERNOR

78 The Senior Governor introduced his report to Court (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

79 The report provided Court with an update on the progress of the Higher Education Governance Bill in Parliament, which included consideration by the Parliament’s Education and Culture Committee of evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.

80 In discussion, the Court noted that it was understood that a number of potential models for the appointment of Chairs were still being considered by the Scottish Government with a view to amending the Bill at Stage 2 of the legislative process. It was also noted that the Scottish
Government had in its evidence to the Committee stated that it did not wish the Bill to result in reclassification of universities as public bodies by the Office for National Statistics and that it would amend the Bill if necessary to ensure this was avoided.

81 The Court noted, however, that it would need to review the impact of the Bill, once passed by Parliament, on the University’s governance arrangements.

REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL

82 The Principal introduced his written report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) on recent developments within the University.

83 The Principal reported further on the publication of the UK Government’s Green Paper on Higher Education. The main provisions of the Green Paper were: the introduction of a teaching equivalent to the Research Excellence Framework exercise; confirmation that the Research Excellence Framework would be retained and undertaken in 2021 with a mid-term ‘metrics based’ review in the interim; and the potential exemption of English Universities from Freedom of Information Law. The Green Paper was also widely perceived to enable the entry of more private higher education providers in England. In addition, the Principal also highlighted the outcome of the Nurse review of UK Research and the implications this would have for the structure of the UK Research Councils.

84 The Principal reported on the UK Government Spending Review, which included research spending being static in real terms, although some funding from the Department for International Development (DFID) was being redirected to the Research Councils. The consequential impact of the spending review overall in Scotland was, however, for a reduction in the overall Scottish Government budget after the Health budget (which was protected) had been accounted for. The Scottish Government would announce on 16 December how it would allocate its resources for 2016/17 and beyond but it was understood that potential budget cuts of 5 to 8% in 2016/17 might be the outcome. As a result, the University was expecting that reductions in the funding it received from the Scottish Funding Council would follow. The Principal noted, that in this context, it was more important than ever that the University continue to grow and diversify its income streams, and in discussion, the potential opportunities in areas within the DIFID portfolio of priorities was noted.

85 The Principal also reported on recent grant funding awards to colleagues in History, Divinity and a £2.5M Medical Research Council Programme Grant to the Aberdeen Fungal Group.

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION

86 The President of the Students’ Association introduced her written report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) on the recent activities of the Association, which included a range of activities in support of student wellbeing, academic representation for students, and fundraising for local charities.

87 The Court welcomed the insight that the report gave to the significant work the Association was engaged in. In discussion, it was noted that the work of the Association in wellbeing would be coordinated with the University’s own ‘Because We Care’ campaign.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MONITORING OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

88 The Court received a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which provided an update on the strategic planning process and an overview of the future size and shape of the University based on the new institutional Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and the School strategic and operational plans. The paper also outlined a methodology for monitoring the University’s progress in meeting targets set out in the University’s Strategic Plan against agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
The Court noted that the following set of high-level KPIs had been developed, with performance against these to be monitored using a traffic light system and a one-page scorecard (an example of which was provided within the paper). The KPIs were:

- People (to include staff development and equality and diversity);
- Institutional profile (to include international market position);
- Student experience, teaching and learning;
- Research; and
- Financial health.

It was proposed that Court would receive at each meeting an updated scorecard, providing an 'at a glance' summary of overall performance against these KPIs, as well as information on performance at the time of the last report, and key information explaining any change in performance. The scorecard would allow comparison with previous performance and would provide some detail on key variables affecting the scoring. More detailed information on underlying targets/metrics would be made available online through the Court intranet.

The Court discussed the future size and shape of the University that was expected to be achieved by 2020 as modelled in the paper and which was based on the aggregation of School Plans. In discussion it was confirmed that while staff numbers were expected to remain at current levels, this was based on overall staff numbers rather than academic numbers, and the importance of appropriate staff:student ratios in the context of anticipated growth in student numbers was planned for. The importance of ensuring changes in Professional Services and increased use of technology did not significantly impinge upon the time available for academic staff to teach and undertake research was noted. The importance of ensuring there was a fair workload for staff at all levels, both academic and non-academic, was discussed and it was suggested that further consideration should be given to staff documenting the time they spent on particular tasks.

The Court discussed the aim of reducing non-continuation in year 1 to year 2 from 11.3% to 6% by 2020 and the activities the University planned to take to achieve this. It was recognised, however, that the University also had to ensure the issue of retention did not simply move from year 2 to 3.

The Court also discussed the need for the University Estate to both accommodate significant growth in student numbers and also be of a standard which would be internationally competitive. The need for refurbishment of some teaching facilities was noted, as was the need for the University to use existing space more effectively and to be more flexible in the hours that teaching was provided.

The Court approved the proposed framework for monitoring KPIs and institutional progress in meeting targets set out in the University’s Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

OUTCOME OF VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE SCHEME

The Court received a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which summarised the outcome of the Voluntary Severance/Early Retirement (VS/ER) scheme and which outlined the next steps that would be required to support the future financial sustainability of the University. The Court considered the paper alongside a further paper (Financial Outlook 2016/2017 to 2018/19 see minute below) which set out the current and future financial pressures facing the Scottish Higher Education sector and the University.

The Court noted that:

- Very substantial savings had been realised through the VS/ER process over the last 6 months in conjunction with the identification of efficiency savings and the Professional Services Review. This amounted to recurrent savings of £8.6M from 2016/17 against the identified funding gap of £10.5M;
- The Professional Services Review would continue and necessary actions would be implemented over the next 6 – 9 months to achieve the remaining recurrent savings target of £1.5m to achieve the overall savings target for the Professional Services of £3M by the start of 2017/18;
- A programme of vacancy management and labour turnover management over at least the next six months, including a restriction on external recruitment and removal of vacant positions from School staffing models to realise savings, would continue;
- After the outcome of the above steps had been taken and where further savings were identified as being necessary to address the financial challenges faced by individual Schools, a process of restructuring supported by the Joint Consultative Committee on Redundancy Avoidance (JCCRA) process would be implemented.

97 The Court noted that Schools were identifying in their five year plans strategic areas for investment and also areas where restructuring (disinvestment) would support that School in achieving its savings targets and longer term ambitions. The University was in the process of integrating devolved budgets with the Schools’ operational plans, including their contribution to the cost of professional services as part of the professional services review. This would determine how Schools would achieve financial sustainability in the short/medium term, their plans for future growth and whether further savings were required.

98 In discussion, the Court noted that the outcome of the Scottish Government’s spending review had the potential to impact significantly upon the University’s financial position in 2016/17 and that financial planning for 2016/17 could not be concluded until that position was known. It was clear, however, that the Scottish Government would have to manage significant reductions across non-health related budgets.

99 The Court noted the concerns expressed by the University and College Union (UCU) and discussed whether the JCCRA process that would be used in the context of any future restructuring/disinvestment within Schools was sufficiently understood by staff.

100 The Court discussed the progress of the Professional Services Review, in particular how the Review would deliver savings and reductions in staffing, while also maintaining the required support for academic areas. It was noted that while the Review was ongoing, it was expected that the centralising of some services would have to be considered and that delivering the necessary further savings would be challenging and require greater prioritisation of available resources.

**FINANCIAL OUTLOOK 2016/17 TO 2018/19**

101 The Court received (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) a paper on the Financial Outlook for 2016/17 to 2018/19.

102 The Court noted that in light of the overall UK fiscal position, the level of funding allocated to Scottish Universities was likely to decrease, although it was also emphasised that this was an emerging and fluid situation, with the paper having been written at the time of the publication of the UK Government spending review and the 2015 Autumn Statement. As had been reported earlier in the meeting, while there had been initial indications of how the funding landscape may look, this could not be confirmed until the Scottish Government announced the outcome of its spending review on 16 December 2015. The paper, however, considered, as far as was possible at the time, how the funding environment may change, reviewed the high level budget assumptions and summarised the impact of this on the University’s revenue budget, cash flow and 10 year plan.

103 The Court noted that the assumption throughout the last strategic planning period was that £12m in cash would be held. The Court noted that it was now recommended that this target be updated and that the minimum cash requirement be to hold one month’s core operating expenditure, which for 2015/16 would be £13m.

104 The Court discussed the University’s net current liabilities which at 31 July 2015 were £19.4 million. It was noted that while it was not unusual for a research intensive University to
show this pattern of current liabilities, and that this was not an issue in the short-term, it would be prudent for the University to aim to improve its liquidity over the medium term, and that this had been raised by the University's External Auditors and the Audit Committee. The Court noted that it was recommended, therefore, that over the strategic planning period, the University move towards a neutral position whereby its current assets met its current liabilities. If that restricted the University's ability to grow and invest, the aim would be for the ratio of current liabilities to current assets not to exceed 1.2 (the current ratio being 1.51).

The Court also noted that since it had last received an update on the Capital Plan, there had been significant developments both internal to the University, within Local Government (City Deal) and within the wider political and fiscal framework and environment within which the Higher Education Sector sits. The City Deal provided an opportunity to rethink the University's investment in Science infrastructure and with the new strategic plan and the school planning process, the University was reviewing more holistically its teaching and research needs going forward. This review of the Capital Plan would reduce spending significantly in the short-term and thus allowed an opportunity to reinstate the recurrent capital budget, with an emphasis on projects which support areas of growth and asset protection, for example, targeted investment in the Meston Building for the School of Engineering.

The University had, therefore, revisited the capital priorities included in the 10 year plan in detail, considering the need for the projects and the funding available to deliver these. In principle, the identified requirements for investment remained the same with these reflecting significant areas of University infrastructure which were not to a quality (condition and functionality) that would allow the delivery of the strategic plan. As such, these projects previously prioritised remained relevant to the University's strategic ambitions. The University was, however, intending to revisit these priorities from the perspective of affordability and means of delivery. This would be done through redefined Project Boards with broader scope supported and guided by the Capital Programme Management Committee. The Project Boards would be guided to revisit the scope, scale and timing of the projects.

In discussion of the capital plan, the Court noted that potential impact of further funding reductions to higher education budgets in Scotland over the period 2016/17 to 2018/19 would need to be received and considered but that the intention was to report further on this to Court by March 2016.

The Court noted that the proposed amendments to the 10 year plan included the following:

- removal of spend profiles pending redefinition and revised project briefs;
- reinstating the £5.5M annual allocation for Recurrent Programme Expenditure;
- removing fundraising related to specific projects pending project definition;
- retaining the assumptions around the level and timing of land sales. These would be updated in the first quarter of 2016 to reflect the marketing process underway.

The Court discussed the overall financial outlook and the need to anticipate and prepare for significant reductions in funding from public sources. The Court also discussed the extent to which the University had over recent years already made significant savings and that it would be very challenging to continue to do so without eroding the Institution’s ability to achieve its strategic objectives. In the context of potential significant reductions in public funding, the Court discussed the need to address over the duration of the strategic planning period to 2020 the operational deficit, the net current liabilities issue that had been raised by the Audit Committee and whether the current forecast level of surplus generation was sufficient to deliver the future success of the University.

The Court:

* Noted the budget assumptions presented and the potential impact upon the University surplus, cash flow and 10 year plan;
• Noted the ongoing review of the capital programme through redefined Project Boards and the Capital Programme Monitoring Committee;

• Agreed that the Operating Board consider in detail the budget assumptions and implications, and that an updated report on the budget, cash flow and 10 year plan be brought to the March Court.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REPORTS

111 The Court received the University Group Consolidated Accounts (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) for the year to 31 July 2015, which had been considered and approved by the Audit Committee. The Court also received a commentary from the Finance Director which highlighted key audit and accounting issues, and the External Auditor’s Report which provided an unqualified audit opinion and which included the Management Letter (copies filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

112 The Court noted the key points arising from the results included in which were: a historical cost surplus of £3.3m; an operating deficit before revaluation reserve release of £2.5m; included in which were costs relating to the voluntary severance scheme of £3.5m and the surplus released on the sale of fixed assets of £4.3m. The management accounts to 31 July 2015 reflected the historic cost surplus of £3.3m, delivering an underlying surplus of £2.7m, having mitigated a significant budget shortfall in-year and exceeding the budget target of £2m.

113 The Court approved the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2015.

114 The Court also noted the External Auditor’s Report and Management Letter (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). The Court noted that the Audit Committee had been concerned that the level of non-audit fees incurred by the External Auditors had exceeded the level of audit fees significantly. This was due to the External Auditors being awarded specific pieces of ‘one off’ project work. While these had been appropriately awarded and represented value for money, the Audit Committee had agreed that in future it should be consulted prior to such non-audit services being undertaken by the University’s External Auditor.

AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

115 The Court received and approved the Audit Committee’s Annual Report for 2014-15, which would be included in the annual financial reports to the Scottish Funding Council (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes), subject to it being amended to correctly reflect the Internal Auditor’s opinion and to acknowledge that the Committee had agreed a policy on it having prior approval of any non-audit services provided by the External Auditors.

116 The Court also noted that the Committee was satisfied with the work of the internal and external auditors.

INTERNAL AUDITOR’S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014-15

117 The Court received the Internal Auditor’s Report for 2014-15 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which would be included in the annual financial reports to the Scottish Funding Council.

118 The Court noted that the Internal Audit opinion was “Generally satisfactory with some improvements required”, but was assured that the Audit Committee had challenged this and had been advised that this rating was consistent with the sector and that the next and highest level of assurance of “Satisfactory” was difficult to achieve but that the University intended to strive for that in future.
INTERNATIONALISATION

UPDATE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KOREA BRANCH CAMPUS

119 The Court received a report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) on recent developments with regard to the University of Aberdeen Branch Campus in South Korea, together with a proposed governance structure for the campus.

120 The Court noted that as the project had advanced, various changes had been made to strengthen the business case and to respond to advice and requests from the University’s Korean Partners (The Korea Ship and Offshore Research Institute (KOSORI), the Gwangyang Bay Free Economic Zone Authorities (GFEZ), Gyeongsangnam Prefecture and Hadong County, and from the Korean Government (Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE)). The majority of these changes had occurred early in 2015 and were reported to the Operating Board (February, April and August 2015).

121 The Court noted, however, that two further changes had occurred during the Autumn which required consideration and which were driven by the need to comply with regulatory requirements in Korea, of which the University had not previously been advised. These were:

(i) A change to the legal structure of the Campus from a special purpose vehicle to a branch campus; and
(ii) Possible changes to the mode of delivery of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training.

122 In discussion, a number of issues with regard to the change in the proposed legal structure were raised, in particular that the University’s liability for the project could change significantly and that further consideration was required as to whether, should this be the case, this was appropriate relative to the risk and return profile of the project. It was also suggested that further information on the tax due diligence undertaken for the University should be received. The Court agreed that it should receive a further report on these issues and to defer approval of the recommendations within the paper to the next meeting.

123 The Court noted that the MOE had requested that the University formalise the governance arrangements for the campus. In discussion, it was agreed to also defer approval of the proposed governance structure for the campus to the next meeting of Court as part of the agreed wider consideration of the project. It was noted, however, that should the campus not be a separate legal entity, the proposed governance structure should confirm that the campus would be subject to the same oversight of the Audit Committee as other areas of the University.

INTERNATIONALISATION UPDATE

124 The Court received (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) an update on the Internationalisation Strategy approved in July 2014. The paper reported on the progress the University had made with regard to the six elements covered within the original strategy, being:

- Institutional profile
- Student Recruitment and Experience
- Transnational Education
- Research Networks
- Staff Recruitment & Mobility
- Alumni & Donors

125 The paper also reported on strategic partnership activity with institutions whose activities aligned with the University’s strategic priorities through which the aim was to:
- directly increase student numbers e.g. through offering joint provision or through incoming study abroad students; and/or
- raise the University’s international profile and reputation, which in turn would have a positive impact on student numbers.

126 The Court noted that in this regard the University was in early stage discussions with Curtin University, Western Australia, about partnership opportunities.

127 The Court noted the outcome of the recent 2015/16 international student recruitment round, together with early indicators for 2016/17. Although these indicators were positive, as was the growth seen in September 2015, it was noted that there remained significant challenges around achieving the financial growth the University aspired to over the next five years.

128 The Court also noted a series of immediate actions which were being implemented to impact on international recruitment for September 2016. The Court was assured that enabling recruitment and other staff to make offers ‘in country’ without seeking further approval from admissions selectors was now standard practice but that this would be subject to clear admissions criteria being met and where this was not the case, it would be referred onto an admissions selector.

129 The Court noted that the programmes offered by the Business School would have a significant contribution to make to international student recruitment in key markets. In this regard, the Court agreed that it should receive a presentation on the Business School and its plans for future development.

OPERATING BOARD REPORT

130 The Court received a report from the Operating Board meeting held on 13 October 2015 and 10 November 2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). The principal items of the report that were noted by the Court were:

- Staffing, including the Voluntary Severance Scheme and Staff Survey;
- Student Population following the September 2015 Entry;
- The 2015 Financial Year End Audit Update and Draft Annual Accounts;
- Insurance Policies and Premiums 2015 - 2016;
- Investments Update;
- The progress of the University’s Athena Swan Action Plan;
- The potential establishment of a Teacher Training Institute in Bahrain;
- A Report from the Capital Programme Monitoring Committee;
- Reports on the OneSource Programme.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Appointment of External Members of the Audit Committee

131 The Court on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee appointed Mrs Lynne MacFarlan to a vacancy for an External Member of the Audit Committee, with effect from 1 January 2016 for a term of three years.

132 The Court on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee appointed Mr Peter Milne as a co-opted member of the Audit Committee, with effect from 1 January 2016 for a term of three years.

PARTNERSHIP, NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

133 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Partnership, Negotiating and Consultative Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). In addition the Court approved the following:
- Amendments to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Policy;
- Amendments to University Promotions Procedures;
- Amendments to the Capability Procedure;
- Amendments to Terms and Conditions of Employment;

AUDIT COMMITTEE

134 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Audit Committee at its meetings on 1 October and 6 November 2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

RESEARCH POLICY COMMITTEE

135 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Research Policy Committee at its meeting on 30th June and 29th September 2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

136 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Student Affairs Committee at its meeting on 19 October 2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

137 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning at its meeting on 21 October 2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

ROUTINE BUSINESS

OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL 2016/17

138 The Court received an update on the development of the University's 2016/2017 Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

139 The paper outlined a proposed timeframe and approval process for the further development of the Outcome Agreement which was required to be submitted to the SFC by 1 March 2016. The Court agreed the proposed approval process which included delegating authority to the Operating Board to approve the final submission of the Outcome Agreement to SFC.

RESOLUTION [PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF COURT]

140 The Court received a paper inviting it to approve a draft Resolution [Procedure for Removal of Members of Court] (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

141 The Court noted that, in accordance with the process for the creation of Resolutions required by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, a draft Resolution setting out the procedure to be followed for the removal of a member of Court from office, had been forwarded for consultation to the Senate, the Business Committee of the General Council, and for public display within the University for the statutory period.

142 The Court noted that following that process, the draft Resolution had been amended in light of comments received as follows:

- That as the Resolution was required to specify the governance process that would be followed rather than the grounds which might give rise to that procedure being invoked, it
would be more accurate for the Resolution to be entitled "Procedure for Removal of Members of the University Court" rather than "Policy and Procedure for Removal of Members of the University Court" as had been proposed in the original draft received by Court in September 2015.
- That the Resolution should specify a time period for receipt by the Governance and Nominations Committee and Court of any written statement from a Court member who was subject to the procedure.
- That the Resolution should make clear that while a member of Court would have the right to be heard at meetings of the Governance and Nominations Committee and the Court, they would not be present when the Committee or Court made their decision on the matter.

143 The Court formally approved the Resolution.

144 The Court also approved an amendment to the associated policy which set out a number of potential circumstances which might require the removal a Court member to be considered, namely to remove the reference in the previously approved policy to "Current and significant mental illness" as grounds for removal of a member of Court.

APPOINTMENT OF REGISTRAR TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

145 The Court received a paper which recommended the appointment of Mrs Caroline Inglis, University Secretary, to the formal role of Registrar to the General Council. (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

146 The Court noted that there was currently a vacancy for both the Registrar and Clerk to General Council. Under Ordinance 110, which governs the General Council's Membership and Registration, it was for the Court to appoint a Registrar of the General Council, who was responsible for ensuring the University maintained an accurate record of all persons on whom the University had conferred an academic degree. The Court noted that the role had traditionally been combined with that of Clerk to the General Council, which includes responsibilities under Ordinance No 143 (Election of the Chancellor and Election of General Council Assessors to Court) with regard to overseeing the processes for the nomination and election of the General Council Assessors to Court and of the Chancellor. The Court noted that the University had appointed Mrs Inglis to the role of Clerk to General Council.

147 The Court also noted that the Business Committee of the General Council had been advised of the proposed recommendation to Court.

148 The Court agreed to approve the appointment of Mrs Caroline Inglis, University Secretary, as Registrar of the General Council with immediate effect.

UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT TRUST ACTIVITY

149 The Court received a report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) on the activities and fundraising performance achieved by the Development Trust since 30 September 2015.

SENATE REPORT

150 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Senate at its meeting of 4 November 2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

151 The report focused on the outcome of the recent Senate Effectiveness Review which had been conducted in October 2015. The Court also noted that the Senate had approved, for its part, the draft Resolution on the Procedure for Removal of Members of the University Court and the establishment of a procedure to revoke the award of honorary degrees.
ANNUAL REPORT ON REDUNDANCY ACTIVITIES

152 The Court noted a report on the management of redundancy activities undertaken by Human Resources for the period 1 December 2014 to 30 November 2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

153 The Court noted the Management Accounts and Reports for the period to 31 October 2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

154 The Court noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 22 March 2016 at 9am.

\[\text{Maggie Chapman}\] \hspace{1cm} \[\text{22/03/2016}\]

RECTOR \hspace{1cm} DATE APPROVED