UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of meeting held on 28 June 2016

Present: Ms M Chapman (in the Chair), Principal, Sir Moir Lockhead, Professor A Akisanya, Mr A Arthur, Professor N Booth, Professor C Brittain, Miss G Clarke, Mr C Duncan, Mr J Hall, Professor P Hannaford, Professor S Heys, 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 Paterson, Mrs J Shirreffs, and Mr D Steyn (for minutes 236-293).

In attendance: Mr C Anucha, Mr D Beattie, Mr A Donaldson, Mrs D Dyker, Mr L Forsyth, Mrs C Inglis, Professor J Paterson (for minutes 294-299 and 306-7), Mr N Qamar (for minutes 243-245), Very Rev Professor I Torrance and Mr B Purdon (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor C Black, Miss M Burgoyne, Mr D Haywood, Cllr J Laing and Mr B Pack.

NEW AND RETIRING MEMBERS

236 The Rector noted that it was Mr Arthur, Miss Burgoyne and Miss Clarke’s final meeting as members of Court. The Court recorded its thanks to all three members for their contribution as governors and in particular for Miss Clarke and Miss Burgoyne’s service to the student community in their roles as sabbatical officers. The Court noted that Mr Anucha would succeed Miss Clarke as President of the Students’ Association on Court and that Ms J Killin, Sabbatical Officer for Welfare, would succeed Miss Burgoyne as a representative of the Students’ Association at Court on an ‘in attendance’ basis.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

237 The following declarations of interest were noted:

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

PRESENTATION ON ABERDEEN FUNGAL GROUP AND MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTRE FOR MEDICAL MYCOLOGY

238 The Court received a presentation on the work of the Aberdeen Fungal Group and Medical Research Centre for Medical Mycology from Professors Gow and Brown. The presentation highlighted that the level of deaths caused by fungal infections around the world exceeded those caused by malaria and several other more well known infectious diseases. The Court noted the Group was regarded as a world leading centre of research in this field and that it had a lead role in coordinating international collaboration between other global centres of excellence.

239 In discussion, the Court discussed how the University might support the Fungal Group to build on its success and, in this regard noted the importance of the University being able to respond to opportunities to appoint high quality staff as they arose.

240 The Court congratulated Professors Gow and Brown, and the Fungal Group, on their success.

MINUTES

241 The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2016 were approved.

242 The Court also noted the updated Action Log (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).
HEALTH AND SAFETY

UPDATE ON ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

243 The Court received and considered a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which provided details of four incidents in May and two incidents in June. The Court also received a report of the Operating Board’s consideration of the incidents which were:

- A member of staff slipped and fell on ice at the old Rowett site;
- The Meston Building was evacuated due to a strong noxious smell similar to that of gas;
- A student caused a release of carbon dioxide in a laboratory;
- A fire in the Chaplaincy, which appeared to be a deliberate act;
- A member of staff working in Malaysia contracted a waterborne parasite; and
- A fire incident occurred in St Mary’s Building, which appeared to be a deliberate act.

244 The report from the Operating Board also included details of one other incident regarding the death of a student on campus in March.

245 The Court noted the follow up actions, where required, that had been taken to address any lessons learnt from the respective incidents. The Court discussed the work being undertaken to enhance the University’s approach to mental health and wellbeing.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE EU REFERENDUM RESULT

246 The Principal provided Court with a briefing on the key issues for the University following the outcome of the referendum on the UK’s membership of the EU and the steps it had taken to reassure applicants, current students and staff from the rest of the EU. The briefing was supplemented by a paper regarding the University’s links with the European Union that had been circulated in Court papers prior to the referendum result (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

247 The Court noted that following discussion with the Senior Governor, the University had in light of the referendum result issued assurances to all current non-UK EU students and prospective students for 2016/17 entry that it would cover the cost of any change to their tuition fee status. The University had also assured all non-UK EU staff that there was no immediate change to their employment position and that as highly valued members of staff the University was committed to supporting them as the situation clarified.

248 The Court noted that the key issues related to future EU student recruitment, the impact on international student recruitment, staff retention and recruitment, research funding, and international reputation. In discussion, the Court was assured that through its own political networks and those of Universities UK and Universities Scotland, the University would be lobbying to emphasise and publicise the risks that faced the University from the referendum result and to ensure its interests were protected as far possible as discussions on the UK’s exit from the EU progressed.

STANDING REPORTS

REPORT FROM THE RECTOR

249 The Rector congratulated all those involved in making the recent Graduation ceremonies joyous and successful occasions.

250 The Rector highlighted the success of the Students’ Charities campaign in raising £120k for local charities which was a reminder of the important part the student community played in the life of the City and Region.

251 The Rector reflected that the result of the EU referendum reinforced the importance of the University as a community which celebrated diversity and of its core values of educating and informing society.
REPORT FROM THE SENIOR GOVERNOR

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

253 The report provided Court with an update on the Review of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance by the Committee of Scottish Chairs (CSC) that would be undertaken by an independent steering group commencing in the summer of 2016.

REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL

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

255 The Principal highlighted in his report the University's key priorities and how these linked to the main pillars of the Strategic Plan: People, Teaching & Learning, Research and Digital Transformation. In discussion, the Court was advised of the changes made to refocus the University counselling service to students, with the greater delivery of counselling services for staff through the Occupational Health Service and a new Employee Assistance Programme accompanied by a twenty-four hour helpline. A review of the University’s mental health strategy was also being undertaken and would report in the Autumn. The Court was also assured that the review of Professional Services was intended to ensure that the most effective support was provided to academic staff in preparation for the next Research Evaluation Framework.

256 The Principal also reported on the appointment of the new Scottish Government Ministerial team for Higher Education, the forthcoming publication of Audit Scotland’s review of Higher Education, and that a review of the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Enterprise was expected.

257 The Principal also highlighted, from his report, the publication of a UK Higher Education White Paper, and the implications its proposal for a Teaching Excellence Framework would have for universities in Scotland.

258 The report also included updates on the outcome of a recent Scottish Funding Council Strategic Dialogue visit to the University, the May Festival, National Awards to the University’s Public Engagement team, the University’s performance in recently published League Tables, notable successes for University staff, and recent research grant awards.

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION

259 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 Aberdeen University Students’ Association (AUSA).

260 The Court discussed the report’s update on student wellbeing and use of the ‘Nightline’ service. It was noted that the information gathered by the Students’ Association on mental health issues amongst students would be fed in to the work of the University’s Mental Health Working Group.

261 The Court discussed the progress of the restructuring of AUSA and that a revised constitution had been agreed by AUSA and was included separately for approval by Court as part of the agenda. The University Secretary highlighted to Court that the Audit Committee report included a summary of its consideration of the findings of the Internal Audit Review of AUSA’s Corporate and Financial Governance which had been carried out at the University’s request. The Court noted that the findings of the report were being addressed by AUSA and that the University was satisfied that good progress was being made. The Court also noted that the University had revised and strengthened the conditions of the disbursement grant it made to AUSA.

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GOVERNANCE

FUTURE COMPOSITION OF COURT

262 The Court received a report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) from the Governance and Nominations Committee with a proposal for a revised composition of Court. The proposal sought to build on the guiding principles agreed by Court and specific issues raised by members at its previous meeting of 22 March 2016. The Court noted that the proposal was for a Court of 17 members (rising to 20 only if required) as follows:

Non-Independent Members
- Rector
- Principal
- Two elected members of staff, one from the academic staff and one from the non-academic staff (as required by the HE Governance Act)
- Two Trade Union nominated members of staff (as required by the HE Governance Act)
- Two Student Members nominated by the Students’ Association (as required by the HE Governance Act)

Independent Members
- Senior Lay Member (elected as required by the HE Governance Act).
- A minimum of eight and not more than eleven Independent Members appointed by the Court at least two of whom shall be graduates of the University and appointed in consultation with representatives of the General Council.

263 The Court also noted that in developing the proposals the Committee had given consideration to the issues raised by Court in March 2016, and that as part of its recommended proposal had included measures intended to address these. In summary these were:

- A requirement that at least two independent members are graduates (and therefore members of General Council) appointed through a panel of the Governance and Nominations Committee including representation from the Business Committee of the General Council and with promotion of the vacancies to alumni.
- The establishment of a formal joint committee composed of Court, Senate and Staff Forum members to ensure there continues to be effective communication between these bodies and involving members of each. This would be in addition to the right of Senate to be consulted on Resolutions and Ordinances and to make representations to Court.
- That Court should have the flexibility to determine where it can benefit through representation from members of the two local Councils and that nominations from them for vacancies should be encouraged. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that the Court agree a protocol requiring it to notify the two local Councils of any vacancies for independent members and that discussions be held with the Councils to agree on any further mechanisms that may be helpful to ensure the University continues to work effectively in partnership with them.

264 The Court also noted a letter of representation from the Business Committee of the General Council expressing their position on the need to retain four elected General Council Assessor positions on Court.

265 There followed an extended discussion, the principal points of which were:

- That the measure proposed of a protocol to ensure the local Councils could nominate members for consideration for appointment by Court and would be routinely notified of vacancies, was a pragmatic way forward while also allowing Court to secure the greater control over its diversity and skills mix that were principles underpinning the reform of Court’s composition.
- Members expressed differing views on the rationale for and benefits of a reduction in the size of Court to the level proposed of 17 to 20. Some noted significant concern that this
would result in the loss of constituencies on Court, such as Senate Assessors, and challenged the benefit to be gained from a smaller Court and whether this reflected the model of most other Scottish universities. Other members expressed concern over the effectiveness of a body of more than 17 members, the limitations that a larger size put on the contribution of members at meetings and noted that many corporate and charitable boards were smaller in size than the model of 17 being proposed. It was suggested that if comparisons with other universities were to be considered they should be with leading universities in the world rather than just Scottish universities.

- Some members noted that they could not support proposals to remove entirely Senate Assessors from the composition of Court and it was suggested that an alternative would be to retain six Senate Assessors in a Court of 25 members. Some members also expressed concern that Court would take an in principle decision before consulting with Senate and argued that this should be done prior to the formal consultation required with Senate on the draft Ordinance which would codify any proposal agreed by Court. Some members also suggested the proposed timeframe for consultation and agreement of proposals should be longer.

- It was suggested that it would have been beneficial to have received an option which set out the minimum changes to the composition of Court that would be required to adhere with the Act.

- Some members also noted that a smaller Court would have implications for the supporting committee structure of Court and the workload of members of Court.

266 The Court agreed:

1) That the Senate Assessor members would develop an alternative proposal for a composition of Court and refer this to the Governance and Nominations Committee for consideration by 1 August 2016.

2) The Governance and Nominations Committee would consider that proposal, together with any other options it considered appropriate, and make a recommendation to Court by 1 September 2016 by circulation, with the option of ratifying the decision at the October meeting of Court.

267 In further discussion, it was suggested that a re-constituted Court should also consider whether the practice of meetings for non-executive members without executive members present should be continued.

**ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ELECTION PROCESS FOR ROLE OF SENIOR GOVERNOR**

268 The Court received a paper *(copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes)* which, on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee, invited the Court to consider the implications of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act for the future appointment and election of the Senior Governor.

269 The Court noted that the paper had been informed by legal advice to the University regarding the expected commencement period for the Act and that, while that advice was subject to confirmation of the timeframe by the Scottish Government, it recommended that the University begin to put in place the procedures necessary for the future appointment through election of the Senior Governor.

270 This Court noted the requirements of the Act and the key issues that would need to be considered, including:

- The Act's requirements for there to be a public advertisement of any vacancy for the position of Senior Governor, then scrutiny of applications against an agreed set of criteria by a committee (including a member of staff and a student) to determine which candidates go forward for election by staff, students and members of Court. The Court discussed whether the committee for this purpose should be the Governance and Nominations Committee or a committee established for the specific purpose of the appointment. It was noted that practice across the sector varied between institutions that combined the functions of a governance and nominations committee and those that had just a nominations committee.
- The development of a process for Court to adhere to the Act’s requirement that remuneration be provided where requested by the successful candidate;
- The term of office for the role of the Senior Governor and arrangements for reappointment by Court;
- Review of the University’s procedures for the removal of members of Court including the Senior Governor to ensure these adhere to the Act;
- How the Act related to the respective roles of the Rector and Senior Governor;
- That the University should review governance processes related to the role of Senior Governor for any further implications resulting from the Act.

271 In discussion, the importance of there being appropriate appointment criteria relative to the requirements of the role was noted.

272 The paper also included a recommendation from the Governance and Nominations Committee that the Court introduce a formal role of Senior Independent Member (distinct from that of Senior Governor) to serve as an intermediary between members and the Senior Governor if required and to discharge other governance functions where these could not appropriately be undertaken by the Senior Governor, such as issues regarding the appointment process for the Senior Governor.

273 The Court agreed:
- that the University begin to develop the necessary processes and procedures to comply with the Act’s requirement for the election of future Senior Governors; and
- to formalise the establishment of a position of Senior Independent Member and that the Governance and Nominations Committee develop a role description for approval by Court.
- That equality monitoring of any nominations/selection panel would also be undertaken;

FINANCE AND CAPITAL PLANNING

BUDGETS FOR 2016/17 TO 2019/20

274 The Court received a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which set out a detailed budget for 2016/17 and indicative budgets for 2017/18 to 2019/20. The Court also received a report of the Operating Board’s consideration of an earlier version of the proposals in the paper.

275 The paper reflected Court’s approval in principle in March 2016, that, in light of the cut in SFC funding and other cost pressures, the University budget surplus for 16/17 would be reduced from £5.5 million to £2.0 million. The paper set out the details of a budget on this basis, including School level budgets, and reported on how to achieve the target surplus. It had been necessary to critically review staffing establishments, vacant posts and requests for additional resource with only essential requests, or those which enable growth, or improve areas with high Student Staff Ratios, being approved.

276 The Court noted that two Schools, Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition and Biological Sciences, both had significant budget issues and each School had identified savings of £1.0m and £600,000 respectively, which might require the use of the approved Joint Consultative Committee on Redundancy Avoidance process. The Court also noted that Natural & Computing Sciences had a longer term plan to save £850,000 over 3 years, with a target of £221,000 in 2016/17. The Professional Services review was on target to achieve £3.0m of recurrent savings by 2017/18.

277 The Court also noted the sensitivity and risk analysis which identified areas which were considered to be at the highest risk within the budget and the quantum of this risk. University management would maintain a clear focus on these risk areas, in particular progress against student recruitment targets for RUK and International students, through management reporting as well as maintaining a budget rigour on all cost centres.

278 The paper noted that the recent Scottish Parliamentary elections, and the subsequent multi-year spending review expected in the Autumn, were likely to have a material impact on the University’s budget in future years, and taking account of this likelihood indicative budgets
had been prepared for 2017/18 to 2019/20. Those indicative budgets showed that the University would remain at, or close to, break-even position giving limited scope for investment. To enable the University to move to, or exceed, the target surplus, or to allow the University to move quickly should the funding settlement arising from the spending review be materially detrimental to our financial position, key strategic priorities had been identified and through an increased focus on these priorities, the University would move to rationalise or capture opportunities for growth. The Court noted that the details of this would be brought to a future meeting.

279 In discussion, it was noted that the Court would receive a report on the future cashflow and debt profile of the University relative to the budget forecasts, and options for capital financing via a bond. It was noted that sustained surpluses of the level outlined for 2016/17 relative to the level of turnover and costs would not be sufficient in future years to generate the level of investment required to improve the University’s competitive position. The potential detrimental impact on the University of the UK leaving the EU was also noted and that scenario planning for a number of outcomes would be undertaken to adapt quickly to further changes, positive or negative, in the funding environment. The Court also discussed the budget position of Schools and noted that the University’s expectation was that Schools should over-time be able to achieve a break even financial position or better, although, they might require support for an interim period before they were able to do so.

280 The Court:

- Approved the detailed budgets for 2016/17;
- Noted the savings required in Biological Sciences and Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition and Natural and Computing Science and the process for achieving these;
- Noted the budget risk areas;
- Noted the indicative budgets for 2017/18 to 2019/20.
- Noted that it would receive at a future meeting a report on the projected cashflow and debt profile of the University and options for capital financing through a bond.
- Agreed that it should receive at a future meeting a report on the performance and financial position of the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health.

Strategic Planning Forecast to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) 2015-16 to 2018-19

281 The Court approved the Strategic Planning Forecast report to SFC for 2015-16 to 2018-19 which reflected the budgets agreed by Court but presented in the format required by SFC and which had been made available on the Court Intranet prior to the meeting.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME FOR KING’S COLLEGE CAMPUS

282 The Court received a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) that provided Court with an outline of the University’s proposed programme for major capital investment over a ten year period to transform King’s College Campus into a world-class centre of excellence for the delivery of teaching, learning and research.

283 The Court noted that the key projects proposed were:

- Relocation of the Law School (including Stack and parts of King’s College)
- Science Teaching Hub (Meston)
- Undergraduate Teaching Block (Taylor)
- Premium Postgraduate and Executive Education (New King’s)
- Relocation of the Business School (Johnston site)
- Oil and Gas Innovation Hub (new build)
- New Student Union (Butchart)
- Digital Transformation
- Sports Facilities

284 The Court noted that all projects proposed had support for digital transformation at their heart, and reflected the need for facilities that support delivery of an enhanced student experience
across the King’s campus. The academic focused projects would support delivery of premium-fee paying programmes; distributed, technology-enabled and distance learning; improved business efficiency; and, the urgent need for improvement and modernisation of teaching and research facilities.

285 In discussion, the Court was reminded of the reasons linked to funding and the emergence of a City and Region Deal that had led the University to reconsider its previous plan for an Energy Building. The proposal for an Oil and Gas Innovation Hub was discussed and how it would potentially link with funding streams from the City and Region Deal was also discussed. It was suggested that consideration should be given to the building being presented as an Energy Hub to take account of the growing significance of renewable energy technology.

286 In discussion, the Court noted that it had previously agreed that the Student Union project was a priority and was assured this remained the case although due to the expected build time of two to three years a two stage process involving a temporary facility in the Hub was being proposed. The need for further discussion regarding this with the Students’ Association was noted. It was also suggested that many staff had understood the project to be progressing and that consideration be given to communicating with the University community to clarify the position.

287 The Court noted the importance of ensuring that the Development Trust fundraising campaign was aligned to support the capital programme, focusing on those projects which were considered to have the most potential to engender donor support.

288 The Court noted that, informed by the discussion, the University would be developing further the prioritisation of the projects, linked to strategic priorities and business planning, with a phased capital plan linked to available income streams.

289 The Court agreed to endorse the further development of these projects as part of a prioritised and sequenced capital programme, informed by cash-flow analysis and business plans.

**IMPACT OF FRS 102**

290 The Court received a paper (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) which set out changes to accounting policy under Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102, which would come in to force for the financial year ending 31 July 2016 and requiring the restatement of the 2014/15 accounts for comparative purposes. The Court also received a report of the Operating Board’s consideration of FRS 102.

291 The Court noted the Audit Committee had considered the issues arising from the new Financial Reporting Standard and had recommended the most appropriate accounting policies to be adopted by the University. The paper presented a restatement of the University’s financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2015 that resulted in a deficit of £14.3M and a reconciliation to the £3.23M historical cost surplus reported under previous accounting regulations. The paper explained that this was due primarily to the statutory inclusion of the USS pension liability and changes to the presentation of the release of revaluation reserves, which did not impact on the University’s cash holdings or liquidity.

292 The Court approved the accounting policies recommended by the Audit Committee but agreed, that due to limitations of time, there should be a further opportunity for Court to be briefed on the implications of the FRS 102 at its next meeting.

**FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE BUSINESS SCHOOL**

293 The Court received a paper (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) which summarised the ambitious and long-term vision for the Business School as a result of a strategic analysis of the sector and competitor business schools. Due to limitations of time, the Court agreed to defer discussion of the paper to its next meeting.

**SOUTH KOREA BRANCH CAMPUS**
The Court received a report on the progress of the Aberdeen Campus in South Korea and the basis upon which the Operating Board had approved the project under authority delegated to it by the Court (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

The Court noted the University and the Korean Partners had agreed on the following to ensure the financial sustainability of the Campus:

- As set out in the University’s application to the Korean Ministry of Education, the University of Aberdeen would make a cash contribution to the Campus project. The University would put forward £1.2M over the first two years of operation (2017: £900k; 2018: £300k);
- The Korean Partners had guaranteed that the University would recover its contribution within the first seven years of operation, as opposed to the first ten years as originally planned;
- The Korean Partners would make up to £2.5M available to the University between 2018 and 2022 to ensure sustainability of the Campus. This financial support would be twofold:
  (i) If the Campus did not perform in line with expectations, the Korean Partners would make payments to the University to ensure the University recovered its financial contribution within the first seven years; and
  (ii) Should the worst case scenario materialise, the Korean Partners would cover financial deficits.
- The financial aid would be made available between 1 March and 31 May every year from 2018;
- The partners had discussed exchange rate risks and arrangements would be put in place to ensure that any exchange rate movement had minimal impact on the project and partner financing.

The Court noted that the Operating Board had agreed that the strategic benefits of establishing a campus in Korea remained strong and, as the review process by the Ministry of Education had been successfully completed and an agreement had been reached on a financial contract for the campus which minimised the financial risks to the University, the Board had concluded that the concerns around the financial risks of the project expressed by Court in March 2016 had now been addressed. The Court noted that the Board therefore had approved, on its behalf, the University’s establishment of its first overseas campus in South Korea, with a planned opening date of March 2017.

**Resolution: Governance Structure of the University of Aberdeen Korea Campus**

The Court also received a draft Resolution for the proposed campus governance structure and a paper which outlined how the internal governance and committee structure of the campus would operate and interface with the University’s wider governance structures.

In discussion, it was noted that the composition of the External Advisory Committee was orientated towards the engineering/offshore industries and it was agreed that further consideration would be given to establishing a similar external advisory committee to focus on the business related programmes of the campus.

Following consideration of the proposed campus governance structure and the associated draft Resolution by Court in December 2015, and as required under the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, the Senate and the Business Committee of the General Council had received and endorsed the draft Resolution. As part of that statutory process, the Resolution has also been made available for public comment with no comments having been received. The Court, therefore, agreed to formally approve the Resolution REMUNERATION COMMITTEE SENIOR STAFF PAY

**Note by Clerk:** Executive members of Court and officers in attendance, bar the Director of Human Resources and the Clerk to Court, withdrew for the duration of discussion of this item.

The Court received a report from the Remuneration Committee on the implementation of the Senior Staff Pay policy agreed by Court at its meeting of 22 March 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).
301 The Court noted that the Remuneration Committee had considered the gender pay gap and noted the negative variance for the institution of 10.4% between the median male professorial salary (£78,038) compared to the median female professorial salary (£71,319) which relate to non-Clinical Professorial staff. The Committee also noted that, when controlled by length of service, the gender pay gap was removed except for tenure in the role for 5 – 10 years, where a gap of 2.3% existed. In discussion by Court, the importance of ensuring that gender pay equality applied to both men and women and with appropriate consideration to performance criteria was noted. It was agreed that trend data on the impact of the voluntary severance through any loss of senior female staff would be brought back to Court.

302 The Court noted that the Remuneration Committee had approved recommendations for 27 consolidated salary awards. This total included a recommendation to uplift six salaries to redress the gender pay gap for those staff in post for 5 – 10 years. The total cost of the recommendations amounted to £89k (including salary on-costs).

303 The Court noted that the Remuneration Committee had considered the Principal’s remuneration package. The Convenor of the Committee had reported on the appraisal of the Principal and that the appraisal process received input from Court members including independent members, the student representative, the Rector and members of the Remuneration Committee. It was unanimously a positive appraisal and it was agreed the Principal had attained the eligibility to receive a bonus. The Committee discussed the matter at length and took account of the fact that the Principal had not taken his contractual bonus for the last five years. The Committee had noted reservations expressed by the Student President, however it had on balance agreed that the Principal should be awarded his contractual bonus to reflect his performance and contribution over the last five years.

BUSINESS FOR EXTENDED MEETING OF COURT

304 The Court received and noted a paper highlighting potential agenda items for discussion at Court’s extended meeting on Tuesday 4 October (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). Members of Court were invited to consider and suggest further areas or issues for discussion to the Clerk.

PUBLICATION OF COURT PAPERS

305 The Court agreed that Court papers should, in addition to being lodged in the Library for public access after meetings with appropriate redactions for confidentiality and commercial sensitivity, be also made available online on the same basis.

COLLABORATIVE ALLIANCE WITH CURTIN UNIVERSITY

306 The Court received a presentation from the Principal, the Vice-Principal Internationalisation and Professor Terry, Vice-Chancellor of Curtin University, on discussions between the two universities towards the establishment of a global alliance. The presentation outlined the key strengths of Curtin University, its staff and student numbers, its Australian and overseas campuses, and its financial structure. The presentation also highlighted the significant academic complementarity between the two universities and where collaborative teaching and research initiatives were underway, with considerable scope to develop further particularly in the areas of Energy, Medicine, Business and the Creative Arts. The Court discussed the strategic advantage for both universities that might be realised through a global alliance and how this might enable each to respond to the challenge of diversifying their income streams and expanding transnational education.

307 The Court welcomed the presentation and endorsed the continuing development of closer cooperation with Curtin University.
OPERATING BOARD REPORT

308 The Court received a report summarising items considered at the meetings of the Operating Board held on 21 April, 10 May and 6 June 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

Risk Management

309 The Board’s report to Court included a copy of the University’s new risk management reporting template and a summary of the current status of key risks for comment and review.

310 The other principal items of the report that were noted by the Court were:

- Financial planning;
- Student admissions and Project 500;
- The University’s compliance with its duties under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (‘Prevent’);
- Staffing matters;
- Reports from the Capital Programme Management Committee;
- Progress of the OneSource project
- The City and Region Deal; and
- Professional Services Review.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

311 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Governance and Nominations Committee at its meeting on 10 May 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). In addition the Court approved the following:

312 On the recommendation of the Committee, the Court approved the terms of reference for an externally facilitated review of effectiveness.

313 On the recommendation of the Committee, the Court approved the reappointment of Mrs McPhail and Mr Hall for further terms of office of up to three years following the conclusion of their current terms on 31 July 2016 and 30 September 2016 respectively.

314 On the recommendation of the Committee, the Court approved a policy on gender balance for sub-committees of Court with a view to beginning implementation from 2016/17. The Court further agreed that the Senate should be invited to agree that a policy on gender balance also apply to joint committees of the Court and Senate and with implementation commencing as soon as practicable thereafter.

315 In discussion of the recommendations regarding reappointment of members and gender balance on sub-committees of Court, it was noted that the gender balance of Court itself remained an issue and that this influenced the achievement of gender balance on committees of Court. It was acknowledged, however, that in any transition to a new composition of Court, gender balance would be a key consideration in how that transition was achieved.

316 The Court also noted:

- that the Committee had endorsed the University having a neutral institutional position in the EU referendum campaign;
- that independent members were invited to submit nominations to the Clerk for a forthcoming vacancy on the Operating Board;
- that the annual governor self appraisal questionnaire would be issued over the summer, subject to the timing of the external effectiveness review, with which it would be combined if possible.
AUDIT COMMITTEE
317 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Audit Committee at its meetings on 21 April and 2 June 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

PARTNERSHIP, NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
318 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Partnership, Negotiating and Consultative Committee at its meeting on 12 May 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

RESEARCH POLICY COMMITTEE
319 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Research Policy Committee at its meetings on 22 March and 3 June 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
320 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Student Affairs Committee at its meeting on 9 May 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING
321 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning at its meeting on 11 May 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

ROUTINE BUSINESS

AUSA CONSTITUTION
322 The Court received and approved a revised constitution for the Aberdeen University Students' Association Constitution (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). (See Minute 261 above).

CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN
323 The Court received the University's draft Corporate Parenting Plan for approval (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

324 The Court noted that under The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 the University, as a Corporate Parent, had a statutory duty to publish and review an action plan which detailed how it would fulfil its obligations to support care experienced applicants and students.

325 The Court approved the Plan.

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A CHAIR IN NAME OF JOHN NISBET
326 The Court noted that, having previously approved a recommendation to establish the John Nisbet Chair of Education and for the statutory process of consultation with the Senate, Business Committee of the General Council and public display to be undertaken, that this process had been undertaken and that no amendments or comments had been received. The Court, therefore, agreed to formally approve the Resolution to establish the John Nisbet Chair of Education (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

SENATE REPORT
327 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Senate at its meeting of 4 May and 8 June 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

Resolution: Changes to Regulations for Various Degrees
328 The Court, on the recommendation of the Senate, agreed to approve the draft Resolution 'Changes to Regulations for Various Degrees' and to do so forthwith in accordance with the provisions of Section 6 (2) of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 so that the amended provision could be applied with effect from the start of the new academic year.

329 The Court also noted reports on the Senate's consideration of:
- The John Nisbet Chair of Education;
- Academic Line Management;
- Update on Collective Agreement;
- Senate Standing Orders;
- Introduction of an online 'Professions Skills Course' for all level one undergraduate student;
- Professional Services Review; and
- Institutional Retention Task Force.

VACATION POWERS

330 The Court received a paper identifying the standard delegated authority that would be used should any urgent business arise during the summer (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

REPORT FROM THE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

331 The Court received and noted a paper providing details of the Development Trust's performance since its last report to Court on 22 March 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

PLANNING: PERFORMANCE AGAINST KPIs

332 The Court received and noted a paper describing the progress made in the first two quarters of 2015/16 against the targets and KPIs underpinning the new University's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

333 The Court noted the Management Accounts and Reports for the period to 30 April 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

334 The Court noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 4 October 2016 at 9am.

[Signature]

4/10/2016
Date Approved