

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of meeting held on 2 October 2013

- Present: Sir Moir Lockhead (in the Chair), Principal, Rector (Dr M Mackie), Mr A Arthur, Dr C Brittain, Ms J Craw, Cllr B Crockett, Ms M Dunn, Mr C Duncan, Professor P Edwards, Mr J Hall (by teleconference), Professor P Hannaford, Professor S Heys, Mr G Hunter, Professor N Hutchison, Professor S Logan, Mr D MacFarlane, Professor P McGeorge, Mrs K McPhail, Mr K Murray, Mr B Pack, Mr B Paterson, Mrs J Shirreffs, Professor J Skakle and Mr D Steyn.
- In attendance: Professor M Greaves, Professor B MacGregor, Professor M Ross, Ms I Bews, Mrs C Inglis, Mrs D Dyker (for items 58-99), Ms J Sewel, Rev Professor I Torrance and Mr B Purdon (Clerk).
- Apologies: Apologies for absence were received from Dr A Baxter, Dr C Black and Cllr R McKail.

FUTURE DIRECTION AND CHALLENGES

- 1 The Principal presented on his vision for the future of the University and the challenges it needed to address to achieve a competitive position among the top tier of UK universities. The presentation analysed the University's present position against a benchmark group of UK universities (9th to 15th in the UK) using a number of key indicators – student numbers (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research), research income and research performance, academic reputation, and employer reputation.
- 2 The Principal emphasised that a key objective was to provide a world class student experience which was intellectually challenging for students, enabled personal growth and citizenship and which recognised that the needs of international, undergraduate and postgraduate students were diverse. In discussion, the importance of staff motivation was noted, together with the steps the University was taking to revise its promotions procedures to improve recognition for teaching excellence in relation to the student experience.
- 3 The Principal outlined how the University had increased student numbers and improved its entry tariffs. A key challenge would be to maintain undergraduate entry tariff comparable to the UK benchmark group and maintain the current spread of students to teaching disciplines. The Court endorsed, in principle, this approach.
- 4 The Principal highlighted that an emphasis on the student experience required the University to focus on improving both retention, and student satisfaction rates. It also needed to consider the reasons why its graduates achieved fewer degrees at 1st/2:1 than its benchmark comparators. The Principal also highlighted the need for the University to focus on further improving staff:student ratios and the employability of its graduates.
- 5 The Principal reminded Court of the imperative to grow the University's postgraduate taught and postgraduate research student population and to continue to embed the strategies that had been put in place. These included developing more links with potential funders and partners to support scholarships and potentially a fees-only scholarship scheme. The importance of growing the research culture and external profile of the University generally was also important to recruiting more postgraduate research students.
- 6 The Principal discussed the future competitive position of the University in regard to its research profile taking into account performance in the 2008 RAE relative to the UK benchmark group, research income per member of academic staff and the proportion of postgraduate research students in the student community. Key challenges were to identify

research performance priorities following the conclusion of the REF 2014 exercise and strategic planning for the next assessment exercise in 2020. As part of this the University would need to continually assess whether it was creating the conditions for academics and academic research to flourish, including interventions to help broker cross disciplinary and collaborative work and would review the effectiveness of the Themes. The University would also undertake School level reviews of research performance and individual performance reviews within the context of the Framework for Academic Expectations. In discussion, the importance of non-academic staff to the delivery of an excellent student experience and research environment was also emphasised and noted.

- 7 The Principal highlighted the continuing importance of collaboration with other universities and further education colleges, particularly within the North of Scotland and in Europe. The importance of advancing its position as the leading UK university for Oil and Gas was also noted. The Court was assured that the University was engaged in the renewable energy agenda through its Offshore Renewables Institute.
- 8 The Principal then discussed the potential cumulative impact that modest improvements across a variety of the indicators that had been highlighted could bring to the University's competitive position. The Court endorsed the Principal's vision to achieve these improvements and noted that management would develop more detailed proposals to identify the actions required to achieve these.

DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY IN THE COLLEGES

- 9 The Heads of the University's three Colleges provided Court with presentations on the progress within their respective areas in delivering the objectives of the Strategic Plan. The presentations covered key issues and developments in relation to teaching and research that were specific to the respective College. They also covered Internationalisation, Institute of Energy, People, Estates and Facilities, and Partnerships, which are key themes of all three Colleges
- 10 The Court discussed a number of issues that emerged from the presentation from the Principal and those of the Heads of Colleges. The Court noted the considerable potential for the Institute of Energy and the importance of the plan to create a building to reflect the value of the initiative for the University. It was noted by one member that given the current timeframe for a new building, the location of the Institute in the immediate and medium term needed to be considered. It was agreed that more information on the Energy Theme and the Aberdeen Institute of Energy be brought to an early future meeting, taking into consideration that the new Director of the Institute had only recently been appointed.
- 11 The Court discussed the Internationalisation Strategy and a number of members noted that it would be helpful to receive an update on the progress of this with particular reference to Key Performance Indicators, market share of international students and information on the return on investment made in additional marketing initiatives. It was noted that the new Vice-Principal for Internationalisation was due to take up post from January 2014 and that four internal Academic Champions for specific regions of the world had been appointed to support Internationalisation activities, particularly student recruitment.
- 12 The Court welcomed the presentations from Heads of Colleges and agreed that it would be helpful to receive further updates from Colleges at an appropriate future point.

SCOTTISH CODE OF GOOD HE GOVERNANCE

KEY ISSUES FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE SCOTTISH CODE OF GOOD HE GOVERNANCE

- 13 Mr Hall introduced a paper with recommendations from the Governance and Nominations Committee to achieve compliance with the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance (*copy filed with the Principal copy of the minutes*).
- 14 The Court noted that the recommendations had been developed in line with guidance provided by Court when it considered the Draft Code in June 2013. The finalised version of the Code had been published in July 2013 and the key changes were identified in the paper.

Composition and Size of Court

- 15 The Court discussed in depth, a recommendation that it agree, in principle, to reduce its size from 28 to 24 members and to begin the formal process and consultation required for the amendment of Ordinance No 133 to give effect to this. This proposal included the addition of a second student representative as previously discussed by Court. The Court was reminded that the Code stated that a governing body of no more than 25 members represented good practice.
- 16 The Court noted that the proposed composition for a Court of 24 members had been developed by the Committee after extensive consideration of a number of options and information on both the size and composition of other governing bodies in Scotland and the University's UK benchmark group. The Court noted that at 28 members, the University had one of the largest Courts in Scotland, with only UHI being of the same size (where there are particular interim reasons for its Court being 28). The Court also noted that with the exception of Glasgow which had five, the other ancients had fewer General Council Assessors members, St Andrews and Dundee having two, and Edinburgh three.
- 17 The proposed composition was as follows:
- Rector
 - Principal
 - Chancellor's Assessor
 - One Vice-Principal
 - One Assessor from Aberdeenshire Council
 - One Assessor from Aberdeen City Council
 - Two Assessors from the General Council of the University
 - Six Senate Assessors
 - President of the Students' Association
 - A further representative of Students
 - A maximum of eight co-opted members, no more than one of whom may be a member of staff.

- 18 The changes from the current composition that were proposed to achieve this were:

- Reducing the number of Vice-Principal members from three to one;
- Reducing the number of General Council Assessors from four to two;
- Removing the position of Rector's Assessor as a member of Court.

- 19 The Committee had recommended, however, that the following should continue to be routinely invited to meetings of Court on an 'in attendance' basis:

- Vice-Principal for Teaching and Learning
- Vice-Principal for Research and Knowledge Exchange
- The Rector's Assessor

20 There followed an extended discussion where comments from all Court members on the proposed changes were received, the principal points of which are recorded as follows:

- The majority of members were supportive of the need to reduce the size of Court and the proposed composition which would also help to address the need for Court to have a majority of independent members. A number of members, while welcoming the proposals for Court to reduce its size, argued that the reduction could go further than the proposed size of 24 members. It was noted, however, that the governance model of Court was not a 'corporate model' and that the inclusion of key stakeholder constituencies within the Court had distinct advantages in the context of both the University community and the wider community it served.
- The Court accepted a proposal that the recommendations be amended to enable the Rector's Assessor to act as an alternate member for the Rector should the Rector be absent.
- With regard to the specific proposal to reduce the number of General Council Assessors, it was noted that one Assessor was not supportive of the proposal as it was framed and suggested the reduction in General Council Assessors should be three rather than two, with the total number of co-opted independent members being reduced by one. A further General Council Assessor noted concerns about there being no reduction in the number of co-opted independent members. While noting that a more radical change could be considered, the Assessor accepted the need to reduce Court's size although preferring a model of 25 members. Taking into account practice elsewhere and the fact that many of the University's co-opted members were alumni, the Court endorsed the Committee's view that a reduction in the number of General Council Assessors was appropriate, noting that this would require formal consultation with the Business Committee of the General Council.
- It was noted that the co-opted independent membership of Court was the only constituency through which the Court could directly appoint members with specific skills considered to be necessary. It was also the only constituency through which the Court could directly address diversity of its membership. Reducing the number of these members would therefore dilute this ability.
- It was noted that the Governance and Nominations Committee used a skills matrix in the recruitment of co-opted independent members and that this would be developed further.
- Some members did not support increasing student representation, given the existing representation of students on Court, through the Student President, Rector and Rector's Assessor when Court was also seeking to reduce the overall size of Court.
- It was agreed that the Court should consider further whether Heads of Colleges should be routinely invited to Court meetings and the Governance and Nominations Committee was invited to consider this.
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21 The Court approved, in principle, the recommendation that Court reduce its size from 28 to 24 members subject to amendment of the proposal to permit the Rector's Assessor to act as an alternate member for the Rector should the Rector be absent.

22 The Court approved that the University begin the formal process and consultation required for the amendment of Ordinance No 133 to give effect to its discussion.

Appointment of an Additional Student Member of Court

23 The Court noted that discussions were ongoing with the Students' Association regarding the method of appointing a second student member and that further proposals to achieve this would be considered by the Governance and Nominations Committee. The Court, therefore, agreed that as an interim measure, a second student representative, of the Students' Association's choosing, be invited to be 'in attendance' at Court.

Majority of Independent Members and Definition of Independent Member

- 24 The Court noted that the Code stated that a Governing Body should have a clear majority of independent members and that it defined independent as being “both external and independent of the Institution.” The Governance and Nominations Committee had agreed that this be interpreted as meaning that any member of Court who is employed by the University or who is a student of the University would not be an ‘independent member’ and this was confirmed by the Court.
- 25 The Court noted that based on this definition, the proposed composition of Court of 24 members would include 12 independent members provided that the Chancellor’s Assessor was always a lay individual and on the assumption that Court would continue to appoint one non-academic member of staff to one of the 8 co-opted positions on Court.

Equality and Diversity on Court

- 26 As previously agreed by Court in response to the Code’s statements on Equality and Diversity, the Governance and Nominations Committee had considered the issue in the context of the membership of Court. As agreed by Court this had included consideration of the setting of goals and the means by which the Court could ensure that the election and appointment processes of all constituencies on Court facilitated greater diversity.
- 27 The Court discussed the setting of a goal that 25% of its membership be female, noting also the fact that a significant number of Court’s membership were either elected or externally appointed. In discussion, some members argued for the goal to be more ambitious but it was emphasised that the proposal considered the goal to be a minimum and that the Court would wish to seek to go beyond that.
- 28 The Court approved the Committee’s recommendations that:
- (i) the Court develops a general statement of intent on its commitment to achieving greater diversity across all categories of its membership;
 - (ii) the Court adopts a goal of a minimum of 25% of its membership being female;
 - (iii) a number of initiatives outlined in the paper to progress equality and diversity within Court and specifically the goal of 25% of its membership being female, are taken forward into an action plan and timeframe for further consideration by the Committee.

Remuneration Committee

- 29 As previously agreed by the Court, the Committee had reviewed the University’s current practices in relation to the interaction of Court and the Remuneration Committee to consider whether they were appropriate in terms of the Code’s requirements.
- 30 The Court discussed the Committee’s recommendations which were:
- that the Court approves senior staff remuneration policy in advance of its application but that the application of that policy to individuals should remain a decision delegated by Court to the Remuneration Committee. These decisions should continue to be reported to Court with sufficient detail to enable the Court to assure itself that the decisions were compliant with the approved policy.
 - that, although not a requirement of the Code, the composition of the Remuneration Committee be reviewed.
 - that the University publishes by salary band the salaries of the Senior Executive Team.
- 31 In discussion, it was queried whether more specific information to Court on senior staff pay should be either made public or reported to Court. It was noted that the proposal to publish by salary band the salaries of the Senior Executive Team would extend current practice. The Court also noted it would now approve the senior staff remuneration policy in advance of the application of that policy to individuals.

- 32 The Court approved the recommendations.

Limits on Terms of Office

- 33 The Court approved a recommendation that the University should explore the legal issues involved in achieving consistency in the terms of office of Court members (with three year terms of office preferred) but agreed that it was appropriate to have both four-year or three-year terms in operation.
- 34 The Court also approved a recommendation that the University should bring the requirements of the Code to the attention of all electing and appointing bodies to deter members being re-elected for periods beyond two terms of four years or three terms of three years.

Members Returning to Service on Court

- 35 The Court agreed that, in principle, the Court should have the power to prevent, where it considered appropriate to do so, the return, to membership of the Court through another route, of members who had already served the Court's agreed maximum terms of office (consecutively) unless there had been a gap in service. It was agreed that, subsequent to any agreement on changes to the composition of Court, the constitutional and legal issues involved in achieving such powers should be identified.

Removal of Court Members

- 36 The Court noted that to be consistent with the Code a governing body should have the power to remove any of its governors but that this could be a legally complex power for it to achieve given the number of elected members on Court. The Court agreed that the University should explore further the legal issues involved in achieving such a power.

Membership of Governance and Nominations Committee

- 37 The Court approved a recommendation that the composition of the Governance and Nominations Committee be amended to include the President of the Students' Association and an additional independent member.

Membership of Appointment Panels for Senior Governor

- 38 The Court approved a recommendation that for future appointments of the Senior Governor, the interview panel be formed from the membership of the Governance & Nominations Committee which would include both student and staff members of Court.

Appraisal of the Principal

- 39 The Court approved a recommendation that the appraisal of the Principal in future include consultation with all members of the governing body.

Rector Protocol

- 40 The Court approved a recommendation that a protocol of the type proposed in the Code to distinguish the role of the Rector from the role of the Chair should be developed and introduced. The Court noted that the current Rector would provide some comments to assist in the development of such a protocol.

Transparency of Court Proceedings

- 41 The Court noted that its agenda and papers (redacted where confidentiality restrictions applied) were available in the University Library after each meeting. The Court approved a recommendation that this practice continue and that the Court agenda also be made available on the website.

CONDUCT OF COURT MEETINGS AND GOVERNOR APPRAISAL REPORT

- 42 Mr Hall introduced to Court a summary report on responses to the Governor Appraisal Questionnaire which had been issued to Court members (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The Court noted the generally positive scores across all areas of the questionnaire and noted the steps the University had taken to seek to address the two areas for improvement arising from the questionnaire.

RESEARCH AND THE REF

- 43 Professor Hannaford presented on the key challenges for the University in research and reported (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) the progress of preparations for submission to the REF 2014. The report summarised the process that had been undertaken to agree upon the quality profile and size of the submission. A number of scenarios were modelled indicating the potential funding outcomes of each with the University adopting an approach which should maximise income. The actual outcome was difficult to predict, particularly as it was impossible to predict the strategies and outcome of other universities submissions. In discussion, the difference in quality profile of some units of assessment from 2008 RAE and the predicted outcome for 2014 REF was noted and the reasons for some of the changes discussed.
- 44 The Court discussed the wider key challenges in research and how the University was seeking to address these. These included, research income, postgraduate research student numbers, retaining and recruiting excellent staff, open access publishing and research data management, the Impact agenda and external accountability. With regard to research income source trends, the Court noted that these had improved in the past year and this was forecast to continue but that there remained a need to improve further, particularly in respect to Research Council income as a proportion of research income.
- 45 In further discussion of research themes, it was noted that the University would in due course review whether the current Interdisciplinary Research Themes remained the appropriate focus in the medium-term. The Court also discussed the issues facing postgraduate research students, many of whom required family accommodation which presented a greater financial challenge in Aberdeen compared to other Scottish cities. As part of its student accommodation strategy the University was considering potential sites for accommodation for mature students with families.
- 46 The Court discussed the extent to which the University had specific research areas in which it was, or had the potential to be, a world leader and the ways in which its research strategy was seeking to advance this. In this context, some members considered that it was difficult to assess the University's competitive position from the information that had been provided. It was noted that the outcome of the forthcoming REF would provide more context to such a discussion in the future.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Student Experience

- 47 Professor McGeorge presented on key issues for the University in the delivery of a high quality student experience and the main actions that were being undertaken to support this.
- 48 The presentation highlighted the University's widening participation activities, in particular through the targeting of local low progression schools. The Court noted that in academic year 2013/14 the University had made 218 offers to potential Home students who were from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 40 postcode areas (SIMD 40) but that only 38 had accepted the University's offer. The University had increased its articulation routes for students from FE Colleges and the number of students progressing from Aberdeen College had increased threefold over the last three years.

- 49 The presentation summarised the main outcomes of the National Student Survey, which surveys final year undergraduate students, in relation to their satisfaction at the University. Overall students remained satisfied with the student experience and between 2012 and 2013 there had been increases in all of the main sub-areas of the survey. However, further work was required, to build upon these improvements and in particular, to better understand the reasons why non-UK students were generally less satisfied. The Court also noted a number of steps that were being taken to increase the numbers of students who responded to the survey. The Court noted that the University was seeking to enhance student support through the implementation of a Personal Tutor Scheme and the 'My Curriculum' project. The Court also noted the main outcomes of student surveys of postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students. In discussion, it was agreed that the University needed to continue to work closely with the Students' Association to raise awareness of the surveys and the importance of student participation to support the continuous improvement of the student experience at Aberdeen.
- 50 The Court noted that retention rates had improved year on year since 2007 and that the number of students not continuing was now at a 5 year low. However, it also noted that the numbers of students not continuing at Levels 1 and 2 remained an issue and the University was considering a range of further innovative ways to identify, at an early stage, where a student may be a 'retention risk'.
- 51 The Court also noted that Curriculum Reform was now in its fourth year since implementation with the first cohort of students under the new system due to graduate in 2014. While the feedback from students continued to be positive, there were some issues around graduate attributes and the enhanced study aspects of the curriculum which the University was reviewing.
- 52 The Court also noted the progress of the University in relation to enhancing the employability of its students.

Role of Technology in Teaching and Learning

- 53 Professor McGeorge provided Court with a presentation on the Role of Technology in Teaching and Learning and an update on the University's portfolio of online education. The presentation highlighted the use of virtual and e-learning technology that had been integrated in teaching and learning provision within the University particularly through the 'MyAberdeen' portal. The Court noted how extensively the MyAberdeen facility was being used by students in addition to the traditional 'face to face' teaching. The Court noted that the University had introduced a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching and Learning specifically for e-learning to help support staff development in this area.
- 54 In discussion, it was acknowledged that future student expectations for the use of technology in their Education may necessitate a change to traditional teaching modes such as fewer lectures and more teaching in small tutorial groups.
- 55 The presentation also provided Court with an update on the University's plans to expand its online delivery of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses, and to provide 'Massive Open Online Courses'. The Court agreed that this was an important issue for further discussion for which a paper on the key issues should be provided to members to consider in advance of the meeting.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE UNIVERSITY

- 56 Ms Sewel provided Court with a presentation and report on the key features of the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The report outlined the progress the University had made in embedding Equality and Diversity in its policies and practice and the key features of the strategy. The report highlighted the proposed strategic outcomes for the forthcoming two years, which were ambitious and went beyond legislative compliance towards being a leader in Equality and Diversity best practice in the higher education sector.

- 57 The report also summarised key initiatives that were being taken forward and other initiatives proposed to further mainstream Equality and Diversity in the University. The Court discussed the University's achievement of an Athena Swan Bronze Award and the steps it was taking to meet the criteria to apply for an Institutional Silver Award, with an aspiration for thereafter Gold. Athena Swan was of particular importance because from 2015 only Medical Schools holding a Silver Award would be considered for UK Government Medical Research funding.

FUTURE AUDIT & FINANCIAL REPORTING ISSUES

- 58 Ms Bews provided Court with a presentation on changes that were being proposed by the Financial Reporting Council through the new Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102). The changes would apply to the University's financial year reporting 2015/16 with comparative reporting for 2014/15. The Court noted that the changes could result in significant changes to the University's future financial reporting, in particular, a severely negative impact in accounting for pensions liabilities. In expressing its serious concern the Court noted that the University, with the support of the University's External Auditors, would model the impact of the changes and report back to the Audit Committee in due course.

MINUTES

- 58 The Court agreed to amend minute 325 of the meeting of 25 June 2013 by the addition of "and the Operating Board" after the word "Management" in the second sentence, viz:

In discussion, a member of Court suggested that there was evidence that potentially challenged the Fairtrade status of Starbucks which had been a key criterion for its selection. The Court agreed that this evidence should be received and considered by University Management and the Operating Board, and that if the Fairtrade status of Starbucks was not secure, the proposal would be reviewed further, but that otherwise it was noted that the proposals would be taken forward.

- 59 The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013 were, subject to this amendment, approved.

CATERING OUTLET: STARBUCKS

- 60 The Court received a letter of representation from the Aberdeen University Students' Association and the Aberdeen University branches of the UCU, UNITE and UNISON, regarding the redevelopment of Café Zeste by Starbucks (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The letter raised a number of concerns regarding the redevelopment including both the matter of consultation with staff and students and the Fairtrade status of Starbucks.
- 61 The Court was reminded that the issue of Fairtrade status had been raised at its meeting of 25 June 2013. Subsequent to that meeting, University management had reviewed evidence provided to it by a member of Court but this did not conclude that Starbucks were not Fairtrade compliant. This had been reported to the Convenor of the Operating Board.
- 62 In discussion, it was noted that a number of members were of the view that the Court had agreed that this further review of Fairtrade status would also be considered by the Operating Board. It was, agreed, therefore that the draft minute of the meeting should be amended to reflect this and that further consideration be now undertaken by the Operating Board.

- 63 The Court noted the further matters raised in the letter of representation. The Court, however, also noted that these had previously been considered by the Operating Board in an earlier joint representation to the Operating Board from the Students' Association and Trades Unions, and had been fully discussed and considered at that meeting with those representatives present. This had been reported to the meeting of Court on 25 June 2013. As agreed by the Operating Board, consultation had taken place on 19 June with representatives of students and trade unions. There had also been nine meetings of the Student Catering Board at which the issues could be raised. The Court, therefore, agreed that appropriate consideration to the issues raised in the letter of representation had been undertaken previously.
- 64 The Court noted the Rector's opposition to the proposed redevelopment of Café Zeste.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INCIDENTS REPORT

- 65 The Court received a report on Health and Safety which included a specific report on an incident involving a member of staff that had occurred since the last meeting of Court and which was reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).
- 66 The Court noted the report on the incident and that a further more detailed report would be provided to the Health and Safety Committee and the Operating Board.
- 67 The Court agreed, however, that at its next meeting it should receive a paper which, in addition to providing more detail on specific points of the reported incident, enabled the Court to discuss the wider subject of health and safety culture within the University.

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

- 68 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Governance and Nominations Committee at its meeting of 9 September 2013 (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*)

REAPPOINTMENT OF THE SENIOR GOVERNOR

- 69 The Court, with Mr James Hall in the Chair, noted that the Committee had considered the reappointment of the Senior Governor whose current term of office would conclude on 31 July 2014. The Committee's report recommended reappointment of Sir Moir Lockhead for a term of three years which would take him to 8 years of service as Senior Governor. The Court noted that this was consistent with best practice guidance in the Scottish Code of HE Good Governance.
- 70 The Senior Governor offered to withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the discussion of the recommendation but the Court agreed that this was not necessary, as non-executive members had previously discussed the reappointment absent of the Senior Governor in June 2013 and had been supportive of the proposal.
- 71 The Court approved the reappointment of Sir Moir Lockhead as Senior Governor for a further term of office from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2017.

APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

- 72 The Court noted that the Committee had discussed vacancies on joint committees of Court and Court-Senate for independent members of Court.
- 73 The Court noted that the Committee had received and approved the Court membership of Committees for 2013/14.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 74 The Court, on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee approved the appointment of Ms Morag McNeill as an external co-opted member of the Audit Committee for a period of three years with effect from 1 October 2013.
- 75 The Court, on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee approved the reappointment of Professor Sir Lewis Ritchie, Professor of General Practice, Medicine, as a member of the Audit Committee for a further term of three years with effect from 1 October 2013.

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

- 76 The Court noted that members were invited to submit to the Clerk nominations for a vacancy for an Independent Member on the Committee (following Court approval of a recommendation that the composition of the Committee be amended to include an additional Independent Member (*See Minutes 24-25*)).
- 77 The Court noted that the Senate Assessors on Court had nominated Professor Jan Skakle, Senate Assessor for the College of Physical Sciences, to the vacancy for a Senate Assessor on the Committee with effect from 1 October 2013.

OTHER ITEMS ON COURT AGENDA

- 78 The Court noted that the Committee had received updates on the following items:

Additional student member of Court (*See Minute 23*)
Report on Governor Appraisal Questionnaire (*See Minute 42*)

REVIEW OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

- 79 The Court noted that the Committee had received and approved a draft Corporate Governance Statement for inclusion in the University's annual financial statements. The Committee had also received a benchmarking review of University governance against the *UK Code on Corporate Governance (Revised 2010 and 2012)* and the Committee of University Chairmen's *Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK*.

SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM: GUIDANCE

- 80 The Court received and noted guidance from the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR) for charities and their trustees regarding appropriate engagement in the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum debate.

OUTCOME OF POST-16 EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) ACT

- 81 The Court noted that the Committee had received and noted a paper which had summarised the key points of the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013.

ATTENDANCE AT COURT AND KEY COMMITTEES 2012/13 (FOR DISCLOSURE IN THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS)

- 82 The Court received from the Committee a draft record of members' attendance at meetings of the Court and selected key Court committees during the period 1st August 2012 to 31st July 2013, which would be included in the University's published annual accounts.

MEMBERSHIP OF COURT 2013/14

- 83 The Court noted that the Committee had received and noted the membership and terms of office of Court for 2013/14. Subsequent to the meeting of the Committee, Dr Christopher Brittain had been elected as Senate Assessor for the College of Arts and Social Sciences, and Dr Corri Black as Senate Assessor for the College of Life Sciences and Medicine.

REPORT FROM THE RECTOR

- 84 The Rector noted that the Court had recorded previously its appreciation of the service that the former Secretary to the University had given and suggested that consideration be given to some further commemoration of this through a formal portrait.

STUDENT ADMISSIONS REPORT

- 85 The Court received and discussed an interim summary report on undergraduate and postgraduate student admissions (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*). The Court noted the 2013/14 applications cycle was still in progress and therefore there was still significant data analysis to be carried out.
- 86 The Court noted that the Scottish/EU full-time intake was forecast to be at the lower end of the range approved by University Management. This would have a positive impact on the management of the overall student population, which was limited by the Scottish Government. However, additional places allocated by SFC to the University for entrants from the most deprived postcodes would not be filled.
- 87 The Court noted that the University had achieved a higher RUK intake than anticipated in budget modelling.
- 88 The Court noted that it was anticipated that the University would fill the 71 additional funded student places allocated by SFC for postgraduate taught provision in specific disciplines.
- 89 The Court noted that the University anticipated a negative variance against budget in relation to international postgraduate taught students in one College.

YEAR-END FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

- 90 The Court noted a summary of the year-end management accounts for the period to 31 July 2013 (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).
- 91 The Court agreed that the year-end results represented a very positive outcome given the challenging external environment.
- 92 The Court agreed that it would be helpful for the management report to routinely include the capital spending section.

OPERATING BOARD REPORT

- 93 The Court received and noted a report from the Operating Board meeting of 9 September 2013, the principal items of which were:
- A report on the Operating Board's Review of its activities during 2012/13
 - Review of the Board's remit and those of its sub-committees
 - A report on research commercialisation activities
 - Year-End Management Accounts
 - Selection of the University's New Investment Fund Managers

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

- 94 The Court noted a report (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*) of the principal items of business considered by the Committee at its meeting on 12 September 2013. The Court also approved the following Staffing Policies and Procedures:
- Capability Procedure
 - Sickness and Attendance Management Procedure
 - Smoking Policy
 - Parental Leave Procedure
 - Flexible Working Procedure

ROUTINE BUSINESS NOT PROPOSED FOR DISCUSSION

ANNUAL REPORT ON INSTITUTION-LED REVIEW OF QUALITY, 2012–2013

- 95 The Court received and approved the Annual Report on Institution-Led Review of Quality 2012–2013 for submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and approved an Annual Statement of Assurance to SFC that the Court had approved the Annual Report. (*Copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*)

ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (ELIR)

- 96 The Court noted an update on the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review and noted that the Senior Vice-Principal had, under authority delegated to him at the meeting of Court on 25 June 2013, approved the final version of the ELIR documentation on behalf of the Court, prior to its submission to the QAA on 23 August 2013.

ORDINANCE NO 143 [ELECTION OF THE CHANCELLOR AND ELECTION OF GENERAL COUNCIL ASSESSORS TO THE UNIVERSITY COURT]

- 97 The Court received a copy of Ordinance No 143 [Election of the Chancellor and Election of General Council Assessors to the University Court] which had been approved by Her Majesty in Council on 13 June 2013.

OUTCOMES FROM STAFF PROMOTION COMMITTEE MEETING

- 98 The Court noted the outcome of the Staff Promotion Committee in relation to the 2013 Promotion Exercise. In discussion, it was agreed that in future the Court should also receive information on the additional cost of the promotions resulting from the exercise.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 99 The Court noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 9 December 2013 at 9.00am-1.00pm in the Linklater Rooms.