

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

UNIVERSITY COURT

A meeting of the University Court was held at 2pm on 10 June 2024 in the Lynedoch Suite, Murrayshall House Hotel, Scone.

Present: Amanda Millar (Chair);
Janice Aitken;
Glenn Allison
Alan Bainbridge;
Tricia Bey;
Ian Buerger;
Claire Cunningham;
Professor Sir Mike Ferguson;
Professor Iain Gillespie (Principal & Vice-Chancellor);
Andrew Lothian;
Professor Linda Martindale
Nyasha Mutembwa;
Dr Anna Notaro;
Karthik Subramanya;
Jay Surti (online);
Professor Garry Taylor;
Karen Thomson;
Sharon Sweeney; and
Susan Walker.

In Attendance: Manaswi Budhathoki (DUSA President-Elect);
Carolina Castro (Lay Court Member-Elect);
Marcus Flucker (Independent Student Member-Elect);
Peter Fotheringham (Director of Finance);
Elise Gallagher (Director of People);
Dr Neale Laker (Deputy University Secretary);
Ian Mair (Rector's Assessor-Elect);
Dr Jim McGeorge (University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer);
Professor Shane O'Neill (Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost); and
Dr Alison Ramsay (Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance))

Apologies: Greg Colgan, Ron Mobed, Carla Rossini, Amina Shah, Jay Surti and Keith Winter.

62. **GOVERNANCE MATTERS: MEMBERSHIP OF THE COURT**

The Court received and considered an oral report from the Chair of the Governance & Nominations Committee on governance matters related to the membership of the Court. The Court was invited to approve the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Lay Member Appointing Panel that Carolina Castro be appointed to the Court as a lay member under Statute 9(1)(k) for a period of four years in the first instance beginning 1 August 2024. Court was also invited to approve recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Lay Member Appointing Panel that Ian Mair be appointed to the Court as Rector's Assessor under Statute 9(1)(d) for a period of three years in the first instance beginning 1 August 2024, subject to the continuing nomination of the Rector.

The following other appointments to the Court had been made following elections:

Manaswi Budhathoki	Elected as President of the Students' Association to serve for Academic Year 2024/25; and
Marcus Flucker	Elected as Independent Student Member of Court to serve for Academic Year 2024/25.

- The Court decided:**
- (i) to formally approve the appointment of Carolina Castro to the Court as lay members under Statute 9(1)(k) for a period of four years in the first instance beginning 1 August 2024; and
 - (ii) to formally approve the appointment of Ian Mair to the Court as Rector's Assessor under Statute 9(1)(d) for a period of three years in the first instance beginning 1 August 2024.

[Secretary's note: subsequent to the meeting, the Court was apprised that Professor Kim Dale, as the sole nominated candidate for the vacancy of Senate member on Court, had been elected to serve as a Senate Member on Court for a term of office of four years from 1 August 2024.]

63. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF COURT**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting of the Court and, in particular, welcomed Manaswi Budhathoki, Carolina Castro, Marcus Flucker and Ian Mair, in attendance to observe their first meeting.

64. **MINUTES**

- The Court decided:** to approve the minutes of the meeting on 23 April 2024, subject to one amendment to the Sederunt.

65. **MATTERS ARISING**

Action Log

The Court received the action log of Court business.

The Court decided: to note the update.

66. **CHAIR'S REPORT TO COURT**

The Court received a report from the Chair on activities undertaken on behalf of the Court and the University at an institutional and sectoral level. Members were advised that the Chair continued to hold regular discussions with the Vice-Chancellor, Secretariat officers and UEG colleagues, which had served to keep her up to date with matters both within and outwith the University.

The Chair thanked those members of the Court who had participated in the recruitment process for new members and congratulated colleagues in the University who had won Herald HE awards. Ms Millar took the opportunity to thank those members for whom this would be the last meeting they attended and paid tribute to Nyasha Mutembwa, Ian Buerger, Janice Aitken, Karen Thomson and Keith Winter individually.

The Court decided: to note the report.

67. **UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP REPORT TO COURT**

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor introduced the University Executive Group report to Court, which provided an update on emerging sectoral issues, strategic matters, and recent events. The Principal advised the Court that, since the last meeting of the Court, the political environment had become more turbulent, with the surprise announcement on 23 May of the forthcoming general election.

The recommendation from the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) Review that the graduate route be retained had been welcomed by the Higher Education community, but it was likely that immigration would dominate the election agenda. International recruitment had dropped across the sector, with the financial consequences already being felt deeply in institutions. Members were advised that the University would focus on rebuilding recruitment in line with its developing globalisation strategy. The UEG with the Globalisation Directorate would review risks and mitigations to create a long-term plan to recover international numbers across open and partnership recruitment and help build a more financially resilient future.

The Principal advised the Court that Professor Fordyce (Dyce) Davidson had been appointed Dean of the School of Science & Engineering and that Professor Emily Boyd would join the University in due course as the first Director of the Binks Institute for Sustainability. Finally, members noted the honorary awards to be made at the forthcoming graduation ceremonies and the recent winners from the Herald Higher Education Awards.

The Court decided: to note the report.

68. **RESERVED BUSINESS: BUDGET AND 5-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN**

The University claims exemption under Sections 27, 33(1)b, and 36 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

69. **REPORT FROM THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS**

The Court received and considered the above report of the meeting of the Senate held on 22 May 2024, prepared for the Court's information. Members noted that any actions detailed within the report would be taken forward as indicated in the minutes for the meeting of the Senate.

The Court decided: to note the report.

70. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(1) Audit & Risk Committee

The Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee introduced the report from the most recent meeting, and drew members' attention to the Committee's consideration of executive summary Internal Audit Reports on CSC Research Finance Management (Post-award) and on School Administration & Support. The Committee had also approved the Internal Audit Plan and the Internal Audit Charter.

The Committee invited the Court to approve its recommendation that EY be re-appointed for the audit of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial statements. This would have the additional effect of bringing the tender processes for both Internal and External Audit services forward at the same time.

Minutes of the Committee's meeting on 14 May 2024

The Court received the minutes of the meeting.

The Court decided:

- (i) to approve the Committee's recommendation to re-appoint EY as external auditors for the audit of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial statements; and
- (ii) otherwise, to approve the minutes.

(2) Finance & Policy Committee

The Court received the report of the most recent meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee. Members were apprised of the Committee's lengthy and involved consideration of the proposed 2024/25 Budget and associated Five-Year Financial Plan. The Committee had also received reports on the SFC Indicative Funding Announcement and on the Estates Key Performance Indicators.

Minutes of the Committee's meeting on 21 May 2024

The Court received the minutes of the meeting.

The Court decided: (i) to accept the Committee's recommendation to approve the 2024/25 Budget and associated Financial Plan to 2028/29; and
(ii) otherwise, to approve the minutes.

(3) Governance & Nominations Committee

The Convener of the Governance & Nominations Committee introduced the report from the most recent meeting and, in so doing, drew members' attention to the Committee's discussions in relation to the forthcoming Quinquennial Review of the Effectiveness of the Court. Members also noted that the Court had approved the recommendation of the recruitment panel to appoint new lay members of the Court as recorded in Minute 62.

The Convener informed the Court that the Committee had also received the Annual Report from the Director of Quality Assurance and had recommended that the quality assurance process be considered robust when the Court came to review the annual report to the SFC on quality. Finally, the Convener reminded the Court that the Committee had agreed the process for the review of the effectiveness of the Chair of the Court and requested that members sign up for a session to be conducted by the Deputy Chair of the Court.

Minutes of the Committee's meeting on 21 May 2024

The Court received the minutes of the meeting.

The Court decided: to approve the minutes.

(4) Reserved Business: Pensions Sub-Group

Minutes of the Committee's meeting on 9 May 2024

The University claims exemption under Section 33 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2022.

(5) People & Organisational Development Committee

The Convener of the Governance & Nominations Committee introduced the report from the most recent meeting and, in so doing, drew members' attention to the Committee's discussions in relation to the project on the Harmonisation of Terms and Conditions of Employment. The Court was also advised that the Committee had approved the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which had been through an extensive consultation process. Members also noted that the Dignity at Work and Study (DAWS) Policy would be circulated to the Committee following agreement by the Local Joint Committee.

Minutes of the Committee's meeting on 15 May 2024

The Court received the minutes of the meeting.

The Court decided: to approve the minutes.

(6) Reserved Business: Remuneration Committee
Minutes of the Committee's meeting on 9 May 2024

The University claims exemption under Section 33(1)b, 36 and 38(1)b of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2022.

71. **STAFF COUNCIL MINUTES**

The Court reviewed the minutes from the meeting on 22 April 2024.

The Court decided: to approve the minutes.

72. **NARRATIVE FOR THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS**

The Chair of Court recommended, and the Court agreed, to highlight to Senate the appointment of Carolina Castro as a lay member of Court and of Ian Mair as Rector's Assessor. The attendance and participation of the DUSA President-Elect and the Independent Student Member-Elect was also to be noted and the Senate advised of the Court's significant discussion of the proposed 2024/25 Budget and associated Financial Plan.

The Court decided: to note the areas for inclusion in the report to the Senate.

73. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE COURT**

The Court agreed that the post-Court communication to staff and students would focus on the Court's discussions on the 2024/25 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan for submission to SFC. Staff and students would also be apprised of the Court's deliberations on the Vibrant Campus and the appointment of new members.

The Court decided: to note the areas for inclusion in the communication to staff and students.

74. **DUSA ANNUAL REPORT**

The Court received and considered the above report. The Chair and Court commended the report and wished Ms Mutembwa every success for the future.

The Court decided: to note the report.

75. **SPORTS UNION ANNUAL REPORT**

The Court received and considered the above annual Sports Union report. The Chair and Court commended the report and asked that their congratulations be passed on to all those involved in the success of the Sports Union.

The Court decided: to note the report.

76. **SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS**

The Court noted the appointment of the following members of staff:

Name	Title	New appointment	Internal promotion
Alix Meekison	Head of Talent Attraction	Yes	No
Nick Brewer	Assistant Vice-Principal (Education)	Yes	Yes

The Court decided: to note the appointments.

77. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair encouraged members to contribute to and to participate fully in the discussions on the strategic focus of the University which would form the basis of the Retreat.

78. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 10 September 2024.

Amanda Millar
Chair of Court
University of Dundee