

## **SUMMARY REPORT OF COURT 17<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021**

The University Court met virtually today, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and congratulated Neena Mahal, Chair of the People Committee, on her award of an MBE in the Birthday Honours list for services to healthcare. The Court extended a welcome to the new Student President, Adil Rahoo, the new lay governor, Jane Wilson, and Professor Andrea Nelson, PVC Research. All were attending their first Court meeting in these roles. Tabitha Nyariki was welcomed back for a further year as the second nominated student governor to Court.

This was the last Court meeting for lay governors, Stephanie Young, Alistair Webster and Gordon Jack, and Court thanked them warmly for their immense contribution to Court over the last nine years as governors and Chairs of Court Committees. Court also said farewell and expressed its appreciation of the contribution of Professor Valerie Webster who is retiring as DVC LTSE later in the summer. Court noted that the Senate nominated governor, Dr Morag Ferguson, is reaching the end of her current term of office and is standing for election for a further term.

What follows is a high-level summary of the main issues addressed by Court today, which will also appear on the University website. Minutes of the meeting will be published on the University website in due course.

Rob Woodward  
Chair of Court

### **1. Principal & Vice Chancellor & Executive Board Report**

The report provided a summary of items arising since the previous Court meeting. These included the success of the recent Research Day, actions to support student and staff well-being, government changes relevant to HE, and initial plans to shape the Executive Board to lead delivery of the 2030 strategy and to address immediate requirements following the retirement of the DVC LTSE.

### **2. Chief Operating Officer's Report including Covid management update**

The COO gave an overview of key developments in finance, staffing, IT and the estate. The predominant focus over the period has been: responding to the cyber incident and building our cyber resilience; developing the budget for 2021-22; and developing plans for September return to campus.

### **3. Student President's Report**

The Student President reported on the activities of the Students' Association since the previous Court meeting and confirmed that the incoming Full Time Officers for 2021-2022 took office on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021. The Student President also presented a report on the activities of the Students' Association in Trimester 2 of the 2020-21 academic year, which is aligned to The Bigger Plan 2020. He advised Court that the Students' Association strategic plan to 2025 would be launched in August.

### **4. University Secretary's Report**

The Court noted the report. In line with Standing Orders, Court agreed to grant delegated authority to the Chair of Court during the summer vacation and approved its work plan for 2021-22.

## **5. Draft University Budget 2021-22**

Court approved the draft University Budget 2021-22, which had been extensively debated and reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, most recently on 24 May 2021, and by Court as a whole at a briefing on the draft budget on 7 June 2021. The Court reviewed the GCNYC budget and agreed to make appropriate provision for the year ahead.

## **6. League Tables and Rankings**

The Court noted a report from DVC Strategy which provided a summary of the key university rankings and league tables released to date in academic year 2020-21. The Court was pleased to see the University's enhanced position in three significant tables published during this academic year. Improvements in student satisfaction, as well as high scores in completion, entry tariffs, and graduate prospects, contributed to positive outcomes in the league tables.

## **7. Student Recruitment Report Trimester A 2021-22**

The Court noted a report from DVC Strategy which comprised an update on the recruitment position for Trimester A 2021-22 for undergraduate and taught postgraduate entry, as at 9 June 2021.

## **8. Student/Staff Ratios 2019-20**

The Court noted a report from the DVC Strategy which provided an overview of Staff Student Ratios within the Scottish university sector, based on 2019-20 HESA data released in April 2021.

## **9. Annual Statement on Research Integrity**

The Court approved the annual statement on research integrity presented by the PVC Research which is prepared as part of the University's commitment to meeting its responsibilities under the Universities UK Concordat to support Research Integrity.

## **10. Report from Senate meeting held on 9 June 2021**

The Court noted the report from the Senate's meeting of 9 June 2021 and debated at length the recommendation (which followed Senate's own full debate) that the University should adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism providing it was accompanied by a caveat to preserve the University's commitment to academic freedom and free speech. The Court recognised the complexity of the debate and the ways in which the definition had aroused controversy in the sector and well beyond. The Court also agreed that the University's existing policies already offered robust defence against, and challenge to, anti-Semitism. However, the Court concluded that on balance the University should adopt this definition which was being promoted by government, albeit only if this was tied to a complementary statement which prevented the definition being misused within the University to undermine academic freedom or freedom of speech within the law. A statement or caveat to be tied to adoption of the definition will be prepared and submitted first to Senate and then to Court for consideration and approval.

### **11. Standing Committee Business**

The Court noted reports presented by the Chairs of the Remuneration, Audit, Finance and General Purposes, and People Committees. The Court approved the Remuneration Philosophy and amendments to the terms of reference of the Remuneration Committee. The Court also approved the Procurement Strategy as proposed by the Audit Committee.

### **12. Media Coverage Analysis – April Update**

The Court noted the report which highlights the media coverage received by the University in April.

### **13. Date of next Court meeting**

The next meeting of Court will take place on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021. A Court seminar on pensions will take place on 7<sup>th</sup> July and one on the issue of sexual misconduct is being scheduled for August.