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TO: ALL MEMBERS OF COURT

A meeting of the University Court constituted under the University of the West of Scotland Order of Council 2019 will be held on **Wednesday 25th November 2020 at 2:30pm via Microsoft Teams.**

Donna McMillan
Secretary to Court

AGENDA

	Welcome		
	Apologies for Absence		
	Declaration of Interest		
1.	Minutes		Document Attached
1.1	Minutes of meeting held on 18 th June 2020	Approval	
2.	Matters Arising		
3.	Determination of Any Other Business		
CORE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES			
4.	Chair's Business	Information	Oral Report
5.	Students' Association		
5.1	Students' Union Report to Court	Discussion	Paper 5.1
6.	Senate		
6.1	Report from meeting of Senate held on 7 th October 2020	Discussion	Paper 6.1
7.	Committee Reports		
7.1	Report from meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 7 th September 2020	Discussion	Paper 7.1
7.2	Report from meetings of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 8 th September 2020	Discussion	Paper 7.2
7.3	Report from meetings of Audit & Risk Committee held on 19 th October 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Internal Audit Report • Audit & Risk Annual Report to Court Corporate Risk Register	Discussion and Approval	Paper 7.3
7.4	Report from meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 20 th October 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Regulations 	Discussion and Approval	Paper 7.4
7.5	Health, Safety & Sustainability Annual Report to Court	Discussion	Paper 7.5
8.	Financial Statements		
	<i>Presentation on the UWS Financial Statements to 31st July 2020</i>		
8.1	Financial Statements to 31 st July 2020	Discussion & Approval	Paper 8.1

9	Annual Institutional Statement of Internal Review Activity	Approval	Paper 9
10.	Modern Slavery Statement	Approval	Paper 10
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES			
11.	Creating Strength from Adversity	Discussion	Paper 11
12.	UWS Performance Report - November 2020	Discussion	Paper 12
13.	Student Population Forecast	Discussion	Paper 13
RELEVANCE AND EXTERNAL IMPACT			
14.	Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Highlight Report	Information	Paper 14
15.	Any Other Business		

Date of Next Meeting: 8th February 2021

Court Strategic Residential Event – 8th and 9th February 2021

Microsoft Teams, 25th November 2020 being the 61st meeting of the Court of the University of the West of Scotland

Present: Mrs K Allum (Chair)
Ms A Buchanan
Mr A Burns
Mrs M Curran
Mrs M Gibson OBE
Mr A Gordon
Ms C Hunter
Professor C Mahoney
Professor C MacDonald
Dr L Meredith
Ms M McCusker
Ms A McKechin
Mr A Miller
Mr A Munro
Mr I Nizami
Dr C O'Donnell
Ms T O'Donnell
Mr K Quinlan

In attendance: Ms D McMillan
Ms D McConnell
Mr A Maclver
Professor J Powles (item 9 only)
Mr M Ross (from item 8)
Mrs A Loudon

Apologies for late arrival were received from Mrs M Curran.

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Dr L Meredith to her first meeting following her appointment as Provost & Deputy Principal. In addition the Chair welcomed, Ms D McConnell, Interim Director of Finance and Mr A Maclver, Interim Head of Finance to their first meeting

Declarations of Interest

It was noted that information relating to the appointment of members of Court was included within the report from the meeting of the Governance & Nominations Committee. No conflict of interest had been identified in this regard.

No other declarations of interest were notified.

1. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th June were approved as a correct record.

2. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising other than those contained elsewhere in the agenda.

3. **Determination of Any Other Business**

No additional items of business had been notified.

4. **Chair's Statement**

The Chair appraised Court of a recent meeting of the Committee of Scottish Chairs where a key focus of discussion had been on the identification of initiatives to support mental health and wellbeing.

Court was interested to note that an external partner had been appointed to support the recruitment of new lay members of Court.

Members noted that a review of the process and content of the skills analysis of the membership of the Court would be included as part of the February 2021 residential event.

5. **Students' Association**

5.1 **Union Report**

The SAUWS President spoke to the report which set out for the information of Court some of the Association's activities during Term One of the 2020/2021 academic year.

The effective partnership working between the Association and the University to ensure that Campuses and the Union spaces were as safe as they could be and that students were supported on return to Campus was welcomed. A survey of student opinion and concerns undertaken by the Association over the summer period had been shared with the University and joint communications to address issues highlighted, particularly around safety on Campus and teaching quality, had been circulated to students in advance of the commencement of Term One.

Court was interested to note that the Association's Strategic Plan would be launched at a public Annual General Meeting in January 2021.

Members commended the Students' Association for their interesting and informative report.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

6. **Senate**

6.1 **Report from Meeting of Senate held on 7th October 2020**

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor spoke to report of the meeting of Senate held on 7th October 2020.

Members were pleased to note that Professor J Powles had now physically relocated to the UK following his appointment in August 2020 as Vice Principal, Learning, Teaching and Students and were interested to note the detail of a presentation made by Professor Powles to Senate in which he set out his vision for the future of learning and teaching at UWS, drawing on the aspirations of the University's Strategy 2025.

Court noted that there had been a marginal increase in satisfaction in the National Student Survey 2020, noting the work being undertaken to review the outcomes and proposed actions in preparation for the 2021 Survey.

Finally, lay members were reminded of the opportunity to observe meetings of the Senate.

7. **Committee Report**

7.1 **Report from Meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 7th September 2020**

The report from the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 7th September 2020 was noted for information.

7.2 **Report from the Meeting of the Governance & Nominations Committee held on 8th September 2020**

The Chair spoke to the report from the meeting of the Governance & Nominations Committee held on 8th September 2020.

Following the conclusion of the appointment of Professor K Sloman, voting was currently under way for the election of a member of Court from the academic and research staff of the University.

Court noted that, by Chair's action, the Chair had approved the re-appointment to membership of Court of Mr A Munro and Mr K Quinlan for a further 3 year period, ie to September 2023. Members also noted that, by Chair's action, Mr A Miller had been appointed to the membership of the Remuneration Committee.

Following end of term discussions, Court approved the recommendation that Professor C MacDonald be re-appointed for one further year, ie to January 2022.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

7.3 **Report from Meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 19th October 2020**

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee spoke to the report from the meeting of the held on 19th October 2020.

He drew members' attention in particular to discussion at the meeting in relation to the requirement by the External Auditors for the University to undertake a detailed assessment of its status as a going concern. Court was reassured to note that, based on the extent of the sensitivity analysis performed by the Finance team, the Committee was sufficiently assured that UWS had adequate resources to continue in operational existence as a going concern until at least 31st December 2021 and had endorsed the report for onward submission to the External Auditors for independent review. Subject to receipt of the final auditor opinion, the Committee had agreed to recommend the draft Financial Statements for year ended 31st July 2020 to Court for approval.

Court approved the 2019/2020 Internal Audit Service Annual Report and the Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court, noting that both documents would be

submitted to the Funding Council along with the approved Financial Statements for year ended 31st July 2020.

Finally, Court noted and endorsed the Corporate Risk Register.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

7.4 Report from Meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 20th October 2020

The Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee spoke to the report from the meeting held on 20th October 2020.

PRC approved the revised Financial Regulations, noting that these had been updated to reflect changes in job titles.

For the information of Court, the Principal & Vice-Chancellor outlined the background and rationale to the decision that provision for “fees only” students would be withdrawn over a 3 year period.

In response to a question, the Principal & Vice-Chancellor confirmed that that there was nothing to suggest that the core grant funding from SFC would be adversely impacted by COVID-19. In addition, the University’s External Auditors had now confirmed that they were comfortable with the assessment and evidence provided of the University’s status as a going concern.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

7.5 Health, Safety & Sustainability Annual Report to Court

The Chair of the Health, Safety & Sustainability Committee spoke to the annual report which provided a summary the work of the committee during the 2019/2020 academic year.

She drew members’ attention in particular to the response to and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UWS community which, as well as introducing new risks, had implications for how existing risks were managed. Representatives from the Resilience and Safety Team had been involved in the staff and student wellbeing workstreams from the Creating Strength from Adversity Project, as well as the workstream on reopening of Campuses. The Major Incident Team continued to meet regularly with other activities, including the introduction of asymptomatic testing centres, ongoing.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

8. Financial Statements

Following a presentation from the Principal & Vice-Chancellor, Court approved the Financial Statements for year ended 31st July 2020.

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor expressed his thanks to all those involved in the finalisation of the Financial Statements. This sentiment was endorsed by the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee who highlighted the significant achievement in

completing year end processes and finalising the Financial Statements to the normal timetable despite current COVID-19 operating challenges.

9. Annual Report on Institution-Led Review for Quality

The Vice Principal, Learning, Teaching & Students spoke to the Annual Report on Institution-Led Review for Quality in AY 2019/2020.

He drew members' attention in particular to the actions taken to ensure that quality assurance continued on schedule during the year and to the key elements of the adaptations required to enable the adoption of a "hybrid first" model of delivery for 2020/2021.

The partnership with online learning specialists Aula to provide a state of the art interactive learning experience initially with level 7 modules in 2020-2021 was noted. In response to a question, the Vice Principal, Learning, Teaching & Students confirmed that opportunities to develop online learning to levels 8+ in 2021-2022 and beyond were being explored.

In order to meet SFC deadlines the report had been submitted to the Funding Council. Court welcomed the positive report and agreed that the statement of assurance signed by the Chair should be submitted to the Funding Council.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

10. Modern Slavery Statement

Court approved the refreshed Modern Slavery Statement. A member suggested that a list of geographical locations of overseas agents may usefully be appended to the Statement for information.

11. Creating Strength from Adversity Project

Court noted for information the report which summarised the work undertaken by the 9 workstreams of the Creating Strength from Adversity Project highlighting achievement of goals, closure of tasks as well as lessons learned and identified good practice. Members commended those involved in the Project and welcomed the move from emergency planning to forward planning to position the University to return to new business as usual.

12. Performance Report November 2020

The Vice Principal, Planning & Recruitment spoke to the report which provided an update on ten measures which had quarterly in-year updates or annual updates in the first quarter of the year.

In response to a question, the Vice Principal, Planning & Recruitment explained that the definition of RAG status varied depending on the individual target and the factors which affected it.

After discussion, Court noted the interim performance update and the endorsed the actions being taken.

13. **Student Population Forecast**

Court noted for information the detailed report which provided an overview of the UWS Student Population immediately following the 2020-2021 Term 1 enrolment period.

14. **Report from Principal and Vice-Chancellor**

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor spoke to the report which provided a summary of general information on University developments and an over view of activities undertaken since the last meeting of Court.

Members of Court joined the Principal in expressing their gratitude to colleagues, students and the wider UWS community for their support and commitment to continue delivering a successful University during these most challenging of times.

As the University remained unable to hold physical ceremonies, virtual celebration events had been for those students who had graduated “in-absentia” in summer 2020. The winter 2020 ceremonies would be hosted by a virtual hybrid module with some pre-recorded and some live elements.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

15. **Any Other Business**

Thanks to Retiring Members

On behalf of Court, the Chair thanked Mrs M Gibson OBE and Mrs M Curran, who would shortly retire as lay members of Court, and Professor K Sloman, who’s period of appointment as member elected by the academic and research staff of the University had concluded, for their commitment and support to the work of the University Court during their time as members of Court.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed.