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TO: ALL MEMBERS OF COURT

A meeting of the University Court constituted under the University of the West of Scotland (Scotland) Order of Council 2015 will be held on **Thursday 25th April 2019 at 4pm in the Board Room, Lanarkshire Campus.** Tea/Coffee will be available from 3pm.

Donna McMillan
Secretary to Court

AGENDA

| | | | |
|------|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | Apologies for Absence Declaration of Interest | | |
| 1. | Minutes | | Document Attached |
| 1.1 | Minutes of meeting held on 11 th February 2019 | Approval | |
| 2. | Matters Arising | | |
| 3. | Determination of Any Other Business | | |
| 4. | Chair's Business | Information | Oral Report |
| 5. | Students' Association | | |
| 5.1 | SAUWS Highlight Report | Discussion | Paper 5.1 |
| 6. | Senate | | |
| 6.1 | Report from meeting of Senate held on 21 st March 2019 | Discussion | Paper 6.1 |
| 6.2 | Revised Standing Orders of Senate | Approval | Paper 6.2 |
| 7. | University of the West of Scotland Order of Council 2019 | Approval | Paper 7 |
| 8. | Scottish Funding Council | | |
| 8.1 | Outcome Agreement – 2019/2020 | Approval | Paper 8.1 |
| 8.2 | Report from SFC Strategic Dialogue Meeting – 18 th March 2019 | Information | Paper 8.2 |
| 9. | Corporate Strategy | | |
| 9.1 | KPI Performance Report | Discussion | Paper 9.1 |
| 9.2 | New Corporate Strategy Progress | Information | Paper 9.2 |
| 10. | Student Population– 2019/20 forecast at April 2019 | Discussion | Paper 10 |
| 11. | Report from Sub Committees | | |
| 11.1 | Report from Meeting of Health, Safety & Sustainability Committee held on 12 th March 2019 Appendix 1 – Sustainability Annual Report | Discussion | Paper 11.1 Appendix |
| 11.2 | Report from Meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 19 th March 2019 Appendix 1 - Financial Regulations | Discussion & Approval | Paper 11.2 Appendix |
| 11.3 | Report from Meeting of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 21 st March 2019 | Discussion & Approval | Paper 11.3 |

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| 11.4 | Appendix 1 - Scheme of Delegation Report from meeting of Audit & Risk Committee held on 26 th March 2019 Appendix 1 - Corporate Risk Register | Discussion & Approval | Appendix Paper 11.4 Appendix |
| 12. | Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Highlight Report | Information | Paper 12 |
| 13. | Provisional Dates of Meetings – 2019/2020 | Information | Paper 13 |
| 14. | Any Other Business | | |

Lanarkshire, 25th April 2019 being the 55th meeting of the Court of the University of the West of Scotland

Present: Dr W Hatton (Chair)
Ms L Barjonas
Ms M Curran
Mrs M Gibson OBE
Mr A Gordon
Mr H Henry
Ms M Hill
Professor C Mahoney
Mr A Munro
Professor C MacDonald
Ms M McCusker
Ms A McKechin
Ms T O'Donnell
Professor S Olivier
Mr K Quinlan
Ms E Shotter
Professor K Sloman
Mr W Smith (by webex)
Dr J Thompson

In attendance: Ms D McMillan
Mrs A Loudon
Mr M Ross (items 8-10 only)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Devlin.

The following were in attendance as observers:

Ms S Daly Chief Executive, SAUWS
Mr C Robertson HR Business Partner

Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were notified.

1. **Minutes of Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th February 2019 were approved as a correct record, proposed by Ms T O'Donnell and seconded by Professor K Sloman.

2. **Matters Arising**

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

3. **Determination of Any Other Business**

No additional items of business were notified.

4. **Chair's Business**

The Chair appraised Court of various external and internal events she had attended since the last meeting of Court.

In particular members were interested to learn of discussion at a recent meeting of UCEA at which common financial pressures across the HE sector had been acknowledged. Recent press coverage on the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements in the private and public sectors had also been discussed.

In this connection, the Chair confirmed that the University, in line with ACAS guidelines, did make use of Settlement Agreements in the case of early retirements or persons departing employment of the University by mutual consent. This was often at the request of the person leaving the employment of the University as it offered them protection, and would not include any indication of their use as recently portrayed in the media, where universities in general have been accused of using them as a means of silencing employees within genuine complaints and concerns.

Settlement Agreements were drawn up in consultation with lawyers representing both the University and the person concerned, with both parties being required to keep the details confidential to protect personal data.

The Chair of the Remuneration Committee confirmed that the details of any financial settlement were scrutinised robustly and agreed by the Remuneration Committee in line with SFC guidelines and UWS policies and, processes but that the full Settlement Agreement was not submitted to the Committee.

In response to a question, the Provost confirmed that the University had been subject to an FOI request in relation to use of Non-Disclosure Agreements which had been responded to in line with normal procedures.

The Vice Chair of Court updated Court on a recent meeting of CUC which she had attended on behalf of the Chair.

5. **Students' Association**

5.1 **SAUWS Highlight Report**

The President of SAUWS spoke to the report which set out the details of recent activity within the Students' Association, highlighting in particular the development of the Student Partnership Agreement, the Student Mental Health Agreement and the work with "Who Cares" Scotland.

Court was interested to note the result of the recent SAUWS election and looked forward to welcoming the new sabbatical team for 2019/2020.

Comments made in the report in relation to the University not providing additional support to the SAUWS Hardship Fund were noted. In this connection the Provost reminded members that the University had ended the requirement for SAUWS to lease the Students' Association building at the Paisley Campus a few years ago and that it had been expected that funding for the SAUWS Hardship Fund would be met from the annual block grant provided by the University. The Provost

outlined for the information of Court the various routes open to students to obtain assistance from the University, highlighting that student welfare remained at the centre of what the University did. The University had also recently scrapped gym fees for students and were thought to be the only Scottish institution to have done so, providing a high quality free resource to students. Additional initiatives to support student welfare had to be balanced against the current financial pressures facing the University. Nevertheless, it had been agreed that the level of block grant would be increased by £16k per annum ring-fenced for SAUWS Hardship Fund support.

The current SAUWS campaign in relation to graduation fees was noted. In this connection, the University Secretary confirmed that this issue was under review, but this again had to be balanced against the significant cost to the University in hosting its graduation ceremonies. A meeting would be held with representatives from SAUWS early next week to discuss the issue in more detail.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive of SAUWS (in attendance as an observer) advised that the Association was forecasting a significant deficit position which had arisen largely as a result of over-estimation in previous years on the value of stock. The Association was working closely with the Chief Finance Officer in relation to the issue and had instigated a review of its Commercial Services with support from the Strathclyde University Students' Association. Opportunities for external funding to support the refurbishment of the Paisley Campus building was also being explored.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

6. **Senate**

6.1 Report from meeting of Senate held on 21st March 2019

The Chair of Senate spoke to the report from the meeting held on 21st March 2019.

Court noted the appointment of Emeritus Professor Martin Myant and the proposals to refresh the committee structures and reporting arrangements to and between Senate, School Board and Standing Committees.

The attention of Court was drawn in particular to the preparation for the QAA Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) which would be held in October/November 2019. Court was reminded of the role of ELIR as one of five interrelated elements of the Quality Enhancement Framework and its focus on the institution's strategic approach to enhancement.

Court noted with interest discussion at Senate in relation to the University's approach to achieving research excellence and the improved Research Excellence Framework (REF) outcomes. A draft REF Code of Practice which would employ a range of criteria to determine inclusion in the REF submission was under consultation with Schools before final submission to the Funding Council.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

6.2 Standing Orders of Senate

Court noted and approved the Standing Orders of Senate which had been revised and refreshed to align with the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2015.

7. University of the West of Scotland Order of Council 2019

The Secretary to Court spoke to the proposed University of the West of Scotland Order of Council 2019. She reminded members that the Scottish Government had agreed to the development of a new Order of Council for the University rather than a further revision to the existing Order. The new proposed Order met the requirements of the Higher Education (Scotland) Governance Act 2016 and was also an opportunity to refresh the drafting to make this clearer and more up to date.

Court approved the University of the West of Scotland Order of Council 2019 and agreed to grant delegated authority to the Secretary to Court to make minor drafting changes prior to formal submission to the Privy Council to enable the new Order to come into force by October 2019, though it was acknowledged that the timetable would be set by the Scottish Government.

Court agreed that initiatives such as agreement to amend school and departmental structures or a review of the University's portfolio were a management responsibility and part of the day-to-day running of the institution. Further consideration would be given to appropriate mechanisms to ensure that members of Court were provided with timely information on, and understood the rationale behind, initiatives of this nature, and the associated progress against plan.

In response to a question, the Chair of Court confirmed the strategic governance role of Court in relation to the development of the institution's Corporate Strategy. The University Court set the strategic direction and was responsible for monitoring performance against that strategy, but the detailed work in the development of the Corporate Strategy was the responsibility of the management team.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

8. Scottish Funding Council

8.1 Outcome Agreement – 2018/2021

The Executive Director of Strategic Planning, Marketing, Recruitment & Engagement spoke to the draft 2019/2020 Outcome Agreement. He reminded members that the University had published a 3 year Outcome Agreement for 2018/2021 but that it was required to submit an Outcome Agreement to the Funding Council on an annual basis and which set out how the University would build on recent progress to help deliver the national priority areas identified by the SFC.

Subject to minor amendment, Court approved the 2019/2020 Outcome Agreement for onward submission to the Funding Council noting that the University reserved the right to adjust the Outcome Agreement following publication of the SFC final funding letter.

It was agreed that the positive development of the University evidenced through its Outcome Agreement should be utilised internally and externally to communicate the University's wide ranging activities in support of enhancing student opportunities and experiences. Court expressed its thanks to colleagues within the Strategic Planning Department for their work in formulating the Outcome Agreement into such a clear and well structured document and in meeting the requirements of the Outcome Agreement guidance documentation.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

8.2 Report from SFC Dialogue Meeting – 18th March 2019

The Executive Director of Strategic Planning, Marketing, Recruitment & Engagement spoke to the report which provided for the information of Court an overview of the discussion at the triennial SFC Strategic Dialogue Meeting held on 18th March. Court noted that the Chair of Court, Vice Chair of Court and Chair of PRC had attended the meeting.

Members welcomed the ongoing dialogue with SFC and the Scottish Government in relation to the financial sustainability of the University, including challenges with UKVI and “fees only” students”.

The Chair of Court thanked all staff for their thorough preparation and contribution to a successful outcome.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

9. Corporate Strategy

9.1 KPI Performance Report

Court noted for information the report which set out progress towards delivery of 4 KPIs published since the last meeting of Court.

Although KPI 14 (improved performance in the 2020/21 Research Excellence Framework) remained as a red RAG status, good progress was now being made in this area.

In response to a question, the Executive Director of Strategic Planning & Development, Marketing Recruitment & Admissions confirmed that a positive drive to encourage students who had been enrolled on research programmes for a long period to complete had resulted in the decrease in total number of students (KPI 17). However, PGR student recruitment was showing strong growth particularly at the London Campus.

More detail on progress with meeting KPI17 would be provided to the next meeting.

A composite report illustrating progress in meeting all of the KPIs would be developed after the summer.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

9.2 New Corporate Strategy Progress

Court noted for information the report which set out progress being made in the development of the new Corporate Strategy. Detailed proposals would be submitted to the June meeting of Court.

10. Student Population – 2019/2020 forecast at April

The Executive Director of Strategic Planning, Marketing, Recruitment & Engagement spoke to the report which provided an overview of all student recruitment to Scottish Campuses.

Court noted that offers for Scottish and EU students were lower at this point than the equivalent period in 2018 for high demand programmes. This was due to a “gathered field” approach adopted by some Schools which slowed down the decision making process.

The progress being made in relation to improved Non-EU Recruitment was welcomed.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

11. Report from Sub Committees

11.1 Report from Meeting of Health, Safety & Sustainability Committee held on 12th March 2019

The Chair of the Health, Safety & Sustainability Committee spoke to the report from the meeting held on 12th March 2019.

Court was interested to note progress being made with the health and safety audit programme and the ongoing activities to increase the number of volunteer Fire Marshalls across all Campuses.

The Sustainability Annual Report was noted for information. Court was delighted to note that Mr D Johnston (former staff governor on Court) had been shortlisted as a finalist in the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges Green Gown Awards in the category of Sustainability Champion for his work in developing initiatives with his team to develop software solutions and agile working to significantly reduce the requirement to travel, reducing carbon, costs and staff time.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

11.2 Report from Meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 19th March 2019

The Chair of PRC spoke to the report from the meeting held on 19th March 2019.

Court approved the revised Financial Regulations.

The Provost appraised Court of the ongoing work on the Rebalancing Project. Early indications were that the level of savings required had not been identified through the initiatives identified to date. As a result, a revised approach was being developed with an Executive lead identified to take forward various workstreams including efficiency savings, international recruitment and a more vigorous approach to operational savings. A further report would be submitted to the next meeting of Court.

Whilst supportive of the project, Court agreed that the rationale behind identification of savings must be robust and that the operational sustainability of the institution was assured. It was agreed that any significant developments in relation to the Rebalancing Project would continue to be advised to Court as they arose.

The Chair of PRC drew members' attention to discussion at PRC in relation to the risk appetite in respect of liquidity of the University highlighting that future financial reports to the Committee would be augmented to include detailed analysis of the underlying cash position and available options, if appropriate.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

11.3 Report from Meeting of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 21st March 2019

Members noted for information the report from the meeting of the Governance & Nominations Committee held on 21st March 2019.

Court approved the revised Scheme of Delegation.

11.4 Report from Meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 26th March 2019

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee spoke to the report from the meeting held on 26th March 2019.

Court approved the re-appointment of Scott-Moncrieff as External Auditors in relation to the July 2019 year end audit.

The Corporate Risk Register was noted for information. It was noted that the additional internal controls agreed by PRC would be made more visible on the Corporate Risk Register.

The attention of Court was drawn to the presentation at the meeting of Audit & Risk Committee on Cyber Security. It was noted that an online Information Security Awareness Training module had been developed and rolled out to staff. The level of engagement in this training module would be kept under review.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

12. **Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Highlight Report**

Court noted for information the report which provided a summary of general information on University developments and an overview of activities since the last meeting of Court.

13. **Dates of Meetings – 2019/2020**

Proposed dates of meeting for the 2019/2010 academic session were noted for information.

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