

This document is available electronically or in alternative formats on request.

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 **Monday 8th February 2021 at 09:30 am via Microsoft Teams.**

Donna McMillan
Secretary to Court

AGENDA

	Welcome to New Member(s) Apologies for Absence Declaration of Interest		
1.	Minutes		Document Attached
1.1	Minutes of meeting held on 25 th November 2020	Approval	Document Attached
2.	Matters Arising		
3.	Determination of Any Other Business		
CORE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES			
4.	Chair's Business	Information	Oral Report
5.	Pandemic Response and Forward Planning Presentation	Discussion	Oral Report
6.	Students' Association		
6.1	Students' Union Report to Court	Information	Paper 6.1
7.	Senate		
7.1	Report from meeting of Senate held on 2 nd December 2020	Information	Paper 7.1
7.2	Report from meeting of Senate held on 27 th January 2021	Information	Oral Report
8.	Committee Reports		
8.1	Report from meetings of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 19 th January 2021	Approval	Paper 8.1
8.2	Report from meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 19 th January 2021	Information	Paper 8.2
8.3	Report from meeting of Audit & Risk Committee held on 26 th January 2021 • Re-appointment of External Auditors	Approval	Paper 8.3
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES			
9.	UWS Performance Report - February 2021	Discussion	Paper 9
10.	Student Population - Term 2	Discussion	Paper 10
RELEVANCE AND EXTERNAL IMPACT			
11.	Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Highlight Report	Information	Paper 11

11.	Any Other Business		

Date of Next Meeting: 25th April 2021 at 4pm

Microsoft Teams, 8th February 2021 being the 62nd meeting of the Court of the University of the West of Scotland

Present: Mrs K Allum (Chair)
Ms A Buchanan
Mr A Burns
Mr A Gordon
Mr A Gubbay
Ms C Hunter
Professor C Mahoney
Mr A Mallick
Professor C MacDonald
Ms A McKechin
Dr I McLellan
Dr L Meredith
Mr A Miller
Mr C Morgan
Mr A Munro
Mr K Murdoch
Ms I Nizami
Dr C O'Donnell
Ms T O'Donnell (except part of item 8.1)
Mr K Quinlan

In attendance: Ms J Maguire
Ms D McMillan
Mr M Ross
Mrs A Loudon

Apologies for absence were received from Ms M McCusker

Declaration of Interest

Members noted that Ms O'Donnell leave the meeting for discussion of the appointment of the Intermediary Member of Court. No other conflicts of interest were identified.

Welcome To New Members

The Chair welcomed Mr A Gubbay, Mr A Mallick, Mr C Morgan, Mr K Murdoch and Dr I McLellan to their first meeting of Court.

1. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th November 2020 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 Business**

The Chair updated members on discussion at meetings of the Committee of Scottish Chairs (CSC) and Universities & Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) where discussion had focussed on the impact of the ongoing pandemic and sharing of best practice, particularly in respect of student and staff health and wellbeing.

5. **Pandemic Response and Forward Planning**

The University Secretary and the Vice Principal, Resources made a presentation to Court on the University's response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which required the longest and broadest incident management response the University had ever delivered.

The University Secretary highlighted the ongoing work of the Major Incident Team, implications for institutional risk management, adjustments made to the learning and teaching environment and the preparations and arrangements put in place for the start of the 2020/2021 academic year. Regular communication with staff and students had been maintained throughout. This had been informed by Scottish Government guidance and Ministerial correspondence as well as sector intelligence and local partnership networks. Asymptomatic testing had commenced in December 2020 offering lateral flow tests to students three days apart.

The Vice Principal, Resources drew Court members' attention to the financial impact and ongoing financial management challenges brought on by the pandemic. Operating costs continued to be closely monitored and consultation with the recognised Trade Unions was ongoing in respect of potential savings in staffing costs, including discussion on the suspension or delay of increments for staff (already agreed and in place for senior staff) and the possibility of opening a new round for a Voluntary Severance / Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme.

6. **Students' Association**

The President of the Students' Association drew members' attention to the Students' Union Report to Court highlighting the revised reporting template with a focus on the Association's Strategic Plan and associated KPIs.

Members welcomed the revised structure of the report and the progress being made, particularly in relation to student engagement and representation. The process for the election of new sabbatical officers for the 2021/2022 academic year had now commenced with a high number of candidates coming forward.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

7. **Senate**

The Chair reminded members of Court of the opportunity to observe meetings of Senate which provided useful insight into the University's academic activities as part of induction arrangements and ongoing CPD activity.

Court noted for information the report from the meeting of Senate held on 2nd December 2020.

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor briefed Court on discussion at an extra-ordinary meeting of Senate held on 27th January 2021 to review arrangements for learning, teaching and assessment in Terms 2 and 3 and academic safety net adjustments to support students through COVID. These included the continuation of adaptive assessments, extension of extenuating circumstances to 21 days and changes to module moderation and the use of External Examiners. Student wellbeing remained paramount along with support for the student leaning journey.

8. **Committee Reports**

8.1 **Report from Meeting of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 19th January 2021**

The Chair spoke to the report from the meeting of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 19th January 2021.

It was noted that, as well as the 4 new lay Governors who commenced on 1st February 2021, by Chair's action the appointment of a further 2 new lay Governors had been confirmed. However, to allow for succession planning these appointments would be effective from 1st September 2021.

Court approved the appointment of the following:

- Ms T O'Donnell as Intermediary Member of Court
- Mr K Murdoch to membership of the Audit & Risk Committee
- Mr A Burns to membership of the Governance & Nominations Committee
- Dr I McLellan to membership of Policy & Resources Committee

It was noted that effectiveness activity this year would focus on Court arrangements including a review of Court's committees structure.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

8.2 **Report from Meeting of Policy & Resources Committee held on 19th January 2021**

The Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee spoke to the report from the meeting of PRC held on 19th January 2021.

He drew members' attention in particular to discussion at PRC on financial performance where two possible scenario financial forecasts for the 2021/2022 financial year had been presented. Although a more optimistic scenario reflected positive assumptions, these remained subject to the continued significant uncertainty of the impact of COVID.

Court noted and endorsed the proposal that £8m of the Revolving Credit Facility be repaid immediately, noting that this ensured optimum value for money and use of resources.

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor clarified for the information of Court the process for Scottish/EU student recruitment. Court noted that as students from the EU were no longer included in Scottish Government capped and controlled student numbers, additional Scottish domiciled students would be recruited to fill available places.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

8.3 Report from meeting of Audit & Risk Committee held on 26th January 2021

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee spoke to the report from the meeting held on 26th January 2021.

Court commended the UWS Internal Audit Service for the award received from the Council for Higher Educational Internal Auditors for “Impact and Excellence in Internal Auditing” in recognition of the UWS Internal Audit staffing model developed to respond to constraints in the market for qualified staff.

Following a review of their effectiveness, Court approved the recommendation for the re-appointment of the University’s External Auditors for the 2020-2021 year end audit.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

9. Performance Report

The Vice Principal, Planning & Recruitment spoke to the report which provided Court with an update on a sub-set of five measures which have in-year updates at period 5 of the year. Court noted that while all five measures were currently meeting the 2020-2021 milestones and there was evidence of strong in-year performance, trend analysis demonstrated the impact of COVID on institutional aspirations.

In response to a question, the Vice Principal, Planning & Recruitment advised that although international students were currently unable to travel and arrangements had been put in place for online delivery, many international students had indicated a willingness to travel once restrictions had lifted. Longer term opportunities for a different model of blended learning with less reliance on physical presence on Campus continued to be explored.

Court agreed that it was imperative that the University remained agile and flexible with the ability to reset across all the performance indicators as the impact of COVID evolved. In this connection, the Vice Principal, Planning & Recruitment outlined the range of activities in place within the Marketing & Planning Teams to monitor progress across all measures to adjust where required.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

10. Student Population Report

Court noted for information the report which provided an overview of current student population and activity to optimise recruitment in Term 2.

11. Principal & Vice-Chancellor’s Report

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

Members acknowledged the challenges being faced by the University as a result of the ongoing pandemic and the restrictions placed on the Higher Education sector as a result of lockdown and commended the dedication and commitment shown by the UWS Principal and colleagues to continue to deliver outstanding education and research outputs throughout these challenging times.

Court was delighted to note that the University had been recognised with a Times Higher Education (THE) Award for research and knowledge exchange excellence and runner up in the Sustainability category in the Guardian University Awards.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

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