

Approved



UNIVERSITY COURT

MINUTES

of the meeting of the University Court held on 19 September 2018 at 2pm in the Events Area of the University.

Chair: Mr E Frizzell
Vice-Chair: Professor E Wilson

Mr J Barnett
Mr M Batho
Ms G Ghafoor
Dr A Ingram
Ms V Lynch

Mr G MacDougall
Mr C Rae
Ms F Robertson
Dr J Rees

Mr D Reeves
Professor N Seaton
Mr M Shaw
Dr K Smith
Mr T Wilson

Secretary: Mrs S Stewart
Clerk to Court: Dr A Ramsay
In attendance: Ms E Fraser, Director of HR & OD
Ms L Jack, observer
Mr J Nicholson, Director of Student Services
Mr D Reeves, Director of Finance & Research Funding
Dr A Robertson, Director of Teaching & Learning Enhancement
Mr I Simpson, Director of Operations
Mrs C Summers, Director of Strategic Planning
Mr O Wright, Vice-President, Students' Association

Court received apologies for absence from Mr A Bailey, Mrs L Baxter, Mr J Burt, Dr Y Deeni, Dr M Hinfelaar and Mr I McDonald. Mr H Aitken joined the meeting by telephone.

NON-RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Mr Frizzell welcomed new member Professor Liz Bacon to her first meeting of Court and Mr Owen Wright, Students' Association Vice-President. Finally, Mr Frizzell welcomed Ms L Jack from External and Corporate Relations, who was attending as a staff observer.

2 DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to indicate if they had, or could be perceived to have, a conflict of interest in relation to the non-reserved items for discussion. None was declared.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT HELD ON 20 JUNE 2018

Court approved the above minutes, submitted as Enclosure 01, as an accurate record.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

Members were advised that there were no matters arising that were not already on the agenda.

5 NSS 2018 OUTCOME AND ANALYSIS

CT/0918/02

CT/0918/03

CONFIDENTIAL

The Principal introduced the above papers, which provided Court with a summary of the outcome of the 2018 National Student Survey (NSS), intended to indicate what the University could learn from the results and to apprise Court of the steps being taken to improve the student experience. Professor Seaton advised Court that management were disappointed with the overall results and thanked Mr Nicholson and Dr Robertson for their timely and insightful analysis of the results.

In discussion, members were advised that some identified actions could be enacted swiftly, while others would require considerable time and effort. The University had remodelled its internal module surveys based upon the NSS model, which had enabled the institution to anticipate that results would decline, but not by how much. The President of the Students' Association (SA) advised Court that the SA had promoted a boycott of the NSS and believed its methodology to have been discredited by the National Statistics Society. Mr Wilson further stated his belief that results had been affected by a lack of understanding of the distinction between the SA and the Student Centre. This notwithstanding, Mr Wilson advised members of his belief that the student population had not been significantly more dissatisfied than in previous years and noted that a small numbers of respondents could disproportionately affect the results.

One member questioned whether there were any correlation between the NSS results and comments received from staff as part of the staff questionnaire. Professor Seaton noted that the pace of change had been more rapid than might have been optimal and that management would take from this a learning point around managing change without over-stressing the system.

In discussion, members sought clarification of the extent to which potential applicants were influenced by the NSS results and were advised that the NSS fed significantly into the newspaper league tables, which were widely publicised and therefore more likely to be influential. When asked if management would take a cross-University approach, Professor Seaton advised Court that, whilst management had looked at issues such as timetabling and the quality of teaching spaces, Heads of Division would be expected to take responsibility for the performance of the Division. Professor Seaton also advised members that training programmes for staff would be expanded to include Programme Leaders. One member identified conflict resolution as a potential means of reducing student dissatisfaction and was advised that the University operated such a system and conducted a learning

exercise each year. BAME responses were noted as being less positive and the Director of Student Services advised Court that focus groups would be conducted as part of the University's application for Race Equality Charter re-accreditation.

Thereafter, Court noted the report.

6 STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSION PAPER

CT/0918/04

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the above paper, intended to provide Court members with an opportunity to share their views on what the University's main focus should be over the next ten years.

Mrs Summers co-ordinated the following workshop sessions, where members' input was collected in order to shape management work on developing the next strategic plan over the coming months. In discussion groups, members were invited to consider the following questions:

- What is important to us as a University?
- Where do we want to be in ten years' time?
- What are the key issues for the University to consider as it develops its new Strategic Plan?

Following the workshop sessions, members were advised that there would be a further opportunity to participate in a scenario planning exercise with the Executive Group and Senior Management Group members in November as part of the planned timescale for the development of the next Strategic Plan.

7 INDICATIVE COURT BUSINESS 2018/19

CT/0918/05

The University Secretary introduced the above broad indication of the planned work of Court for the coming session, particularly in terms of the development of the next strategic plan. Members were invited to submit comments and suggestions to Mrs Stewart or Dr Ramsay.

Thereafter, Court noted the proposed schedule.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as Wednesday 14 November 2018.

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CHAIR