



General Council Meeting of 13 June 2020: Annex to Billet

THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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Papers for the General Council Meeting on 13 June 2020 (Cancelled due to Covid-19)

1 Formal communications from the University Court

The following Draft Resolutions have been received:

- 5/2020 Foundation of a Charles and Ethel Barr Chair of Cancer Research
- 6/2020 Foundation of a Chair of Digital Manufacture
- 7/2020 Alteration of the title of the Chair of Chemical Engineering Technology
- 8/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Future Construction
- 9/2020 Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations
- 10/2020 Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations
- 11/2020 Alteration of the title of the Chair of Physics
- 12/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Pure Mathematics
- 13/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Exoplanet Characterisation
- 14/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Paleaeontology and Evolution
- 15/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Volcanology
- 16/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Applied Physics
- 17/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Microbial Evolution
- 18/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Industrial Mathematics
- 19/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Harmonic Analysis and Partial Differential Equations
- 20/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Membrane Separations
- 21/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Software Transformation
- 22/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Sustainable Biotechnology
- 23/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Artificial Intelligence
- 24/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Earth Dynamics
- 25/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Category Theory
- 26/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Experimental Particle Physics
- 27/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Stem Cell Biology and Early Development
- 28/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Geometry
- 29/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Hydrogeology and Coupled Process Modelling
- 30/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Digital Manufacture
- 31/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Robotics
- 32/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Global Change Mapping
- 33/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Machine Learning and Inference
- 34/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Biophysics
- 35/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Robot Learning and Autonomy
- 36/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Urban Geography
- 37/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Signalling and Proteostasis
- 38/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Fluid Dynamics
- 39/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Energy, Environment and Society
- 40/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Modern and Contemporary Art History
- 41/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Scots Private Law
- 42/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Architectural History
- 43/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Modern British History
- 44/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Social and Economic Anthropology
- 45/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Literature and the Environment
- 46/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Multilingualism
- 47/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Global Urbanism and Resilience
- 48/2020 Foundation of a Personal Chair of European and Global Education Governance

49/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Finance
50/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Craft History and Theory
51/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Cinema and Iran
52/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of South Asian and Comparative Politics
53/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of American Literature
54/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Germline Biology
55/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Population Medicine & Veterinary Public Health Policy
56/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Small Animal Orthopaedics
57/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Developmental Psychology
58/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Cardiovascular Pharmacology
59/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Arterial Remodelling
60/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Integrative Fish Genomics
61/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Molecular Neural Development
62/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Veterinary Parasitology
63/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Conservation Science
64/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Sociology of Science and Medicine
65/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Experiential Student Learning
66/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Medical Imaging and Physics
67/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Translational Chemistry and Biomedical Imaging
68/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Neurology and Clinical Epidemiology
69/2020	Foundation of personal Chair of Clinical Pharmacology
70/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Clinical Cardiology
71/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Developmental Endocrinology
72/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Property Law
73/2020	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Dermatology

2 Report of the Academic Standing Committee

for the General Council meeting on 13 June 2020

Convener of the Academic Standing Committee: Professor Stephen Hillier

The Academic Standing Committee met on 23 January 2020 to receive information from the University Chaplain, Reverend Dr Harriet Harris, on the role of the Chaplaincy in supporting student and staff wellbeing. The background to the meeting was increasing recognition of the importance of individual wellbeing to University 'health' as a whole and it is evident that the Chaplaincy provides an invaluable service in this regard. It is there for the entire University community and offers a drop in space where staff are available for one-to-one conversations, as well as courses including Mindfulness and Compassion.

At the meeting on Monday 24 February 2020, Mr Andrew Wilson (President, EUSA), briefed the committee on the current student priorities. Issues covered were Tackling Elitism, Widening Participation, Freedom of Expression, Sexual Health and Guidance (#NoExcuse), Mental Health and Wellbeing (#TakeTen), Living on a Budget, and Sustainability. These initiatives illustrate a greater ownership of the agenda by the students themselves.

3 Report of the Constitutional Standing Committee

for the General Council meeting on 13 June 2020

Convener of the Constitutional Standing Committee: Professor David Munro

The **Constitutional Standing Committee**, chaired by David Munro, completed its review of the *Constitutional Arrangements for the Working of the University of Edinburgh General Council and its Business*

Committee, which was approved at the Half-Yearly Meeting of the General Council held on 1st February 2020. The revised Constitutional Arrangements are available on the General Council website. An Amendment to the Standing Orders regarding the twice-yearly meetings of the General Council was also approved by the General Council. The Committee was pleased to report to the Business Committee that University Ordinances 213 and 214 on General Council related matters had finally been approved by the Privy Council on 12th February 2020. The Constitutional Standing Committee will be reviewing two additional amendments made by the University Court to Ordinances (Nos. 208 and 216) relating to the appointment of academic staff and academic freedom. Following the usual practice, there will be a consultation period on these amendments (6th April-1st June 2020), allowing opportunities for the Business Committee and individual alumni to make comments.

4 Report of the Finance and Services Standing Committee

for the General Council meeting on 13 June 2020

Convener of the Finance and Services Standing Committee: Dr William Duncan

The year began with a meeting on 20 January with Lee Hamill, Director of Finance to discuss the Annual Report and Accounts for the Year to 31 July 2019. This comprehensive, well-illustrated report both fulfils an essential statutory function, as well as being a key communications document aimed at a broad audience, including members of the General Council.

In February, the committee met with Anne Richards the outgoing Vice-Convener of Court who informed members about the new arrangements for the organisation of the University Court as well as offering some reflections about her time spent in the role.

The March meeting with Gary Jebb, Director of Estates, had to be postponed due to the coronavirus restrictions and will be rescheduled for a later date.

5 Report of the Public Affairs Standing Committee

for the General Council Meeting on 13 June 2020

Convener of the Public Affairs Standing Committee: Ms Sophie Marshall

The Public Affairs Standing Committee (PASC) began the new semester with a workshop session to review the development of the new General Council website, which is a work in progress. In February, the committee met with Stuart Tooley, Community Relations Manager and Gavin Donoghue, Deputy Director of Stakeholder Relations, to discuss the university's integration into the city and its relationship with local communities.

The February Half Yearly Meeting included a tour of the Robotarium. This was a great opportunity to learn about the world of robots, the emerging technologies that the University is investing in and the impressive range of collaborations that are taking place on both a local level, with close by universities, and globally, with ongoing work with NASA.

6 Report of the International Standing Committee

for the General Council Meeting on 13 June 2020

Convener of the International Standing Committee: Ms Krystyna Szumelukowa

At its meeting on 6th February, the committee met with Professor Andrew Scott (Professor of European Union Studies, Dean International (Europe), and co-Director of the Europa Institute) and Helen McMillan, (Regional Director for Europe). Brexit mitigation has been addressed by the University since the referendum in 2016 to safeguard its current engagement and future association with the EU as well as consolidating and embarking on new partnerships within Europe. The latest example is the new

European University project UNA EUROPA which partners Edinburgh with universities in Berlin, Bologna, Kraków, Leuven, Madrid and Paris. Future UK and Scottish Government legislation will materially affect student and staff retention and recruitment. Resources are in place at the university to support the consequences of Brexit and in this regard there is genuine added value that can be given from alumni in Europe.

There is potential to improve the exchange of information in advance between the University and alumni clubs, within the clubs themselves and between alumni clubs through the development of facilities such as Platform One and alumni offering “on the ground” support to students and staff via the many varied partnership and research programmes in Europe. The ISC will be looking to play its part in delivering on this potential.

7 Meetings of the Business Committee

The Committee has met once since its last published Report, viz. 27 February 2020. The meeting scheduled for 30 April 2020 was cancelled due to Covid-19.

Papers from the General Council Meeting on 1 February 2020

A Presentation of the Annual Report of the University at the General Council Meeting on 1 February 2020

Principal and Vice-Chancellor: Professor Peter Mathieson

Rector: Now I'd like to hand over to the Principal, Peter Mathieson, to present the annual report of the University.

Principal: Thank you very much Ann. It is the first of February 2020, which will go down in history as the first day of the UK's life outside the EU.

I'm very particularly pleased, as others have said, to think that people who are still in the EU have come to join us, and particularly welcome also the other people joining us online. And for those of us joining from China, I'd like to say China is very much in our thoughts around the scary current situation around Coronavirus. I will say a little bit more about both Brexit and Coronavirus as I move on.

This is my third opportunity to do this. And the other thing about it being the first of February is that it's almost two years, almost exactly to the day, since I started the job, which tells you that one year ago when I was doing this, I was one year into the job and two years ago when I was doing this, I was literally days into the job. And I remember that occasion rather strongly, as you might imagine. It was a bit all a bit stressful, all a bit new. Now, I have the great pleasure of the fact that I can look around a room like this and see quite a lot of faces that I know and I recognise. And that was not the case for me two years ago. So I do welcome the engagement with General Council. It's not just at these meetings, I get the opportunity to interact with members of General Council on lots of occasions. And there are some of you in the room that I don't know and for those of you that I don't know then I look forward to having the opportunity to get to know you better. So my task is to review the academic year, 18 to 19. This is the agenda that I'll try and follow.

I'll give you, as is I think, tradition as part of this report, some detail on some of, but by no means all of, the ways in which we recognise the excellence of some of our members of our University community with a set

of awards. And through all of these things, I'll only be very brief, but there'll be more details available online if people want them.

I'll say something about City Deal, particularly to say that this building is one of the manifestations of City Deal. City Deal, which I think you will have heard a lot about over the years of its creation, is becoming reality. In many ways this building is one of the very important physical manifestations of the incredible acceleration of the University's impact that was possible as a result of City Deal. I'm here in the Informatics Building probably once a week I think, because we quite often welcome significant visitors to the University by bringing them here, partly because of City Deal and partly because it's a beautiful facility and it's got some very exciting things going on in it. So I will say a bit more about City Deal.

It's impossible not to say something about Brexit. Victor [Goldberg] and I met actually ten days ago in Brussels at a time when we were still members of the EU, and the reason that Victor and I met is that I was there for the launch of a new university alliance, which again, I'll mention very briefly, but is one of the ways in which the University is dealing with what I've called in my communications 'the new reality'. Instead of hand-wringing about what's happened or how long it's all taken or how complicated it all is, I feel a very strong sense that we've got to start living with that new reality, adapting to it. And as you've heard me say before, I am supremely confident that the University of Edinburgh will survive Brexit and any other political upheavals that it might face in the next few years, because it's a fantastically strong university that's survived many more disruptive things in its 430 odd years of history.

I will try and leave time at the end so that people can ask me questions about anything they wish, either things that I've covered or anything else that I haven't covered.

You'll see that the three colleges which are listed here are rather similar in terms of size of staffing numbers, but very different in terms of size of student community.

And there are obvious implications for staff:student ratios that leap out from those numbers. We are in total just over 40,000 students. We're one of the biggest universities in the UK: depending on which statistic you take, we're either the fourth or the fifth biggest. We have 15,000 staff. We have 220 of those staff employed in subsidiary companies. And then the other staff that are not in the colleges are listed in these three professional services groupings here. So we are a large organisation, with a very evolved structure, with an enormous on campus student community.

And as you've heard, if you start counting the students that are part of our MOOCs, (massive open online courses), our student numbers are in the millions. So this is a large organisation in terms of the composition of those students.

In terms of the composition of those students, Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences is more than half the University in terms of student numbers. And this graphic here shows where the students come from. So 28 percent are Scottish domiciled, 26 percent are from the rest of the United Kingdom. So in total, just over half of our student population is from the United Kingdom, 34 percent from overseas outside the EU and 12 percent from the EU.

And you'll be well aware that the 12 percent from the EU and the 28 percent from Scotland currently enjoy the same tuition fee structure which is underwritten by the government. It's not free university education. I never miss an opportunity to say that. When anyone talks about free university education, I always say it's not free. If you want a high quality product, someone has to pay for it. In this case, for these two groups of students, it's underwritten by the Scottish government, but it's not free. And I will go to my grave saying that.

In terms of the types of study that the students are undertaking, this breaks it down between undergraduate, postgraduate taught, largely master's programs, and postgraduate research, which can be either master's or doctoral programs. And again, by college. So again, you'll see that Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences is very dominated by undergrads, 16,000 out of 25, whereas in the other colleges the proportion of undergrads is a bit lower. So 3,000 out of 7,000 in Medicine and Vet Medicine and 7,000 out of 11,000 in Science and Engineering. So overall we are a very undergraduate predominant organisation. 26 almost 27,000 out of 43,000.

This tells you about the origins of the students, the nations of origins of the students. And I showed a similar graph to this, I think, in both of my previous annual reports, because the overall pattern is similar, but actually some of the individual numbers are changing. So in my first report to the General Council, which is actually where I didn't really do a report, Charlie Jeffery did the report and I remember that one of the charts that Charlie showed, that for the first time in that year, the number of students from China had overtaken the number of students from North America. You can see that that's still true. But look at the gap now. This difference is dramatic. And this is not because American students or Canadian students have gone down. This is because Chinese students have gone up. We're receiving extraordinary numbers of applications from mainland China to both our undergraduate and our postgraduate program. And some of my friends in Hong Kong have said, "Is this the Mathieson effect?" And I said, no. I think it's actually much more likely to be the Trump effect. But we are receiving extraordinary levels of high quality applications from China. Now, this, you might think, sounds a nice problem to have. We are concerned about some aspects of the diversity of the international experience that some students will receive at the University of Edinburgh, particularly for our on campus students. We have some classes in some schools that are almost entirely mainland Chinese students. And that means that they're not necessarily getting the most diverse experience and nor indeed are the other students making up the class, who are in the minority.

We have a substantial number of American and Canadian, so put the two together. North American students still don't catch up with the total number of Chinese students. So those are very important students to us as well. And we often have to remind ourselves that we've got a very long history of recruiting from the United States. That gives us, of course, a very important alumni body in the United States. And again, I'm very pleased that some of them are up early in the morning to join us online. I've made an effort in my two years in the job to engage with alumni all around the world, and I've particularly done so in the United States and it's always a great pleasure to do so.

There are one or two anomalies.

India has a population roughly approximately the same as China. Not quite the same, but it's catching up fast. And yet we get 3,500 students from China, only 245 from India.

There is a single striking explanation for that which relates to visas. Until the Theresa May government introduced a restriction on post study visas that number was higher. But as a result of that restriction, Indian students have tended to go to Australia. Australia has now overtaken the UK as the second destination of choice for Indian students after the United States. And that's largely because Australia has a much more permissive post study visa arrangement. Now, the new government, the Boris Johnson government, has made some very promising and welcome changes to government policy on post study visas. It's not yet become law, but we think it will. And apparently, even though it's not yet become law, we're already seeing an increase in applications from India. So I do think that the changes in visa will allow us to start to address what is actually in population terms, quite a significant anomaly. This is an English speaking education system in India with very high quality students and we're under recruiting from India.

So we have a disproportionate dependence on China and the United States. And in the meeting in June, one of the issues that we might discuss is the level of our dependency on the recruitment of Chinese students. It's not an Edinburgh specific problem, but this population is big in Edinburgh.

Some information about applications and acceptances, and all I'll say is that the comments I made in the previous two reports, which is that we're about 10 times oversubscribed, so we get about 10 times as many applications as we're able to take.

The gender balance of roughly 40 percent male and roughly 60 percent female, again, is pretty typical of most British universities. But it is something that we monitor and that we note.

So a business which turns away nine tenths of its customers has to ask itself whether that's the right approach or not. There are some universities in the world trying to take the students that they're unable to take in terms of on campus experience into an electronic experience. So we could, if we really wanted to, scale up our online learning, we could have an intake of 60,000 students here, but at the moment we are helpfully supplied with very high quality applicants.

And that's obviously a sign of the University's international standing.

You've heard that the Finance Director has reported to the Business Committee. I'm only going to give very brief details of the financial situation. It's all available in the annual reports and you've had access to that by other routes. We did pass a very significant threshold during this academic year and that is the annual income of the university passed a billion. So we're now one point one billion. So this is, as I said, a big organisation.

You'll notice that in the academic year in which I'm reporting, it looks like I've done a terribly bad job because the expenditure has exceeded the income. There's a very good reason for that, which is that because of the way in which we have to report our finances under the legislation, we have to include some items which are not real cash and are not real expenditure. The biggest one is the provision of £195 million pounds to cover our share of the pension pot in the university superannuation scheme, because we're a very big provider, a very big employer. And so, therefore, our share of the pension scheme is large and therefore the financial provision for the scheme is enormous. So that's not real money, but it has to be reported in our accounts. So our actual expenditure was £195 million smaller than is reported there. But the way we report it makes us look as if we're in deficit. And that actually applies to, I think without exception, every British university that has a membership of the University Superannuation Scheme. So again, we're not alone on that and we have to look at the underlying surplus and the underlying expenditure to see the real picture. But that's what we're reporting in our annual reports.

You can see that just over 300 million of that income, so roughly a third, is in the form of tuition fees and educational contracts from, particularly, the Scottish government. Almost a third is in research income. Before anybody asks me, the amount of that which comes from the EU is about 40 million and it's about 14 percent of our annual research income, which is disproportionate. The Russell Group average is 10 percent. So Edinburgh does extremely well out of European funding schemes and our dependence on those schemes is disproportionately high compared to other British research intensive universities. So if I sound concerned about Brexit, I hope that explains one of the reasons why I sound concerned. Funding body grants another 200 million. We have net assets of 2 billion pounds. You're sitting in one of them.

And as I've said, all of these documents are in the public domain so you can see them and examine them at your leisure.

Briefly, some of the awards that we've conferred in this academic year. Edinburgh University Student Association have a series of sets of awards but the big event of the year is the EUSA Teaching Awards. Over 2000 nominations were received. So these are usually for staff members, not always for staff members. But you can see that there's a great deal of enthusiasm amongst our student association for nominating people in recognition of their contributions.

A huge exercise in assessing all these nominations and choosing the awardees. The award winners, again, not going through these in great detail, but this is just some photographs of the ceremony of some of the award winners this year. And this is a list of some of the key awards.

One thing that struck me when I was looking at this slide is the really international nature of the names, someone who sounds Japanese, someone who sounds Russian, someone who sounds, probably, Greek.

I see this every time I do anything in the University of Edinburgh, when I do a graduation ceremony, always struck by the extraordinary international nature of the student community. And often of the staff making the presentations as well. And this is another example of that. So these were members of staff recognised by the students in the various categories listed. And again, I think my slides are going to be provided online.

This is the second slide of the same set of awards. So, again, you can see that they recognise roles as supervisors. They recognise individual courses.

And the best overall teacher, I suppose, is the sort of the Premier League or the Six Nations, which is rather a topical phrase to use today, which is, I'm sure, why the meeting will finish at three o'clock. The best overall teachers, these are the awards that they're given in various parts of the University and they're given to some of these people that you've seen here.

And I just want to acknowledge the incredible breadth of excellence and innovation that exists amongst our teaching staff. We've really got some really devoted and clever and innovative people trying to bring the best of education to our students. The University itself has some other awards. And so one category is the Chancellor's Award. But they're given in the name of our Chancellor and they're given in recognition of the following categories: one for impact, one for research, one for a rising star and one for teaching. And they're presented at the Chancellor's dinner in the presence of the Chancellor at Holyrood on one of our excellent occasions, which the Chancellor allows us to host in various Palaces around the United Kingdom. This year, Richard Mellanby, who's done some extraordinary work in relation to rabies, really making substantial impacts on populations in underprivileged parts of the world.

Charles ffrench-Constant is a neuroscientist who has, for a number of years, led very significant work on, particularly multiple sclerosis, but also on a number of other degenerative neurological diseases. And this recognition for his research impact was recognition of that.

Jennifer Culbertson is a linguist. When I phone to tell people they've got these awards, I have to do two things. Firstly, I have to say to them, congratulations I've chosen you to have this award. And secondly, it's conditional on you being available on such and such a date to come and receive it, because it has to be confirmed in the presence of the Chancellor. And when I phoned Jennifer, she was actually in Kenya and answered my phone and answered her phone as if she was just walking down the street in Leith. And she reminded me of that when I saw the other day, because part of our work is in relation to rare African languages.

And Alan Convery has done some spectacular teaching innovation in the School of Social and Political Science.

There were lots of nominations. I could have chosen almost anybody because there was some fantastic examples. But these are the ones that I chose for this year's Chancellor's awards.

And then there's something called the Principal's Medal, which again is something that I get to decide myself. So I'm really showing off the things that I can influence. This is open to professional services and academic staff, also to students, and it's awarded in recognition of contribution to the University but also to

the wider community. And so this is a slightly different category of award. And the recipients this year were a group of people from the Usher Institute. Harry Campbell and Igor Rudan who have done some extraordinary long term, sustained work with impact in many parts of the world.

This is not just a local community effect. This is actually a Global community effect, really impressive in terms of its scale and reach. And then in terms of service to the community I chose Adam Budd for his work, particularly in Edinburgh, but also to some extent internationally and the projects are listed there.

So these again are examples of fabulous contributions to communities in Edinburgh, in the rest of the UK and in many cases in far distant parts of the world. We really do have extraordinary global reach. And then finally, the Tam Dalyell prize for public engagement.

If any of you have not heard Steve Brusatte talk or read any of his books, I'd thoroughly recommend that you do. He actually, I may have said this before, but he was the first member of the University of Edinburgh that I spoke to after my appointment was announced, because at the time he was in Hong Kong.

And the reason he was in Hong Kong was because he has a collaboration with the University of Hong Kong, which is also pretty good at palaeontology. And within, I think, a microsecond of my appointment being announced, I got an email from him saying, "I'm in your university. Can I come and talk to you?" And that's an example of Steve's sort of initiative and assertiveness, if you like. He is a fabulous speaker and a fabulous writer. He's American by birth and in an interview which Steve actually sent me the link for, former President Clinton was asked, "What's the favourite book that you've read in the last twelve months?" And he said, "The Rise and Fall of Dinosaurs by Steve Brusatte". Steve was rather pleased about that. But it shows you that his books get attention. And he's a fabulous asset to the University. And actually a very self-effacing and humble character. So the kind of person that we've got in plenty. But he's just one that's had a particular set of prominence this year. So in terms of public engagement, Steve received that award.

Okay, City Deal. So correctly named the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. But it's a bit of a mouthful. So we tend to truncate it to City Deal. But it's important that it's not just Edinburgh. It is South East Scotland. It's a regional deal. A lot of the focus is on Edinburgh and indeed a lot of the focus is on the University of Edinburgh. We are the single biggest part of this deal. This deal was negotiated before I arrived. I can't take any credit for the idea or the plan. It was signed in my first year in the job, as I think you'll remember, and I very much feel that I'm responsible for its delivery rather than its creation. And we are now well into that delivery phase. And as I said, the Bayes Centre in which you sit is the first physical manifestation of what will ultimately be five hubs around DDI which stands for Data Driven Innovation. This is the strap line. This is bringing the University's very long history of excellence in computer science, artificial intelligence and machine learning into application and into business engagement, into community engagement and into the development of skills. It's a fantastically constructed set of programs. And as you can see, the Bayes Centre is open and flourishing and other bits, the other hubs, are all in gestation.

The Edinburgh Futures Institute, which is what's happening in the former infirmary, is going to be another example. The University's Policy and Resources Committee just this week discussed the proposal for the Usher Institute, which at the moment exists, but is spread around a whole series of, in many cases, rather unsuitable buildings in central Edinburgh and will be provided for in a new building at the Edinburgh Bio Quarter. And that's a big capital project, largely funded by city deal money, but also involving some University commitment. And that's just on the way to approval, hopefully by Court sometime soon. And then that will be the next manifestation.

But the Deal, I would say in overall summary, I think it's going as well as could be expected. There is still some concern about the magnitude of the promises that we've made under the Deal and our ability to deliver them. I'm actually not worried about our ability to deliver, but it's going to require a lot of work by a lot of people to make sure that we do and to make sure that we're measured accordingly. The whole thing

was constructed by a relatively small number of people, one of whom was Charlie Jeffery, who talked about it two years ago at this meeting. And a big part of what is required is to make this much more known to the whole University community and much more part of the University's mission. I think Michael and others that are working hard to do that are making great progress in doing that. But there's still undoubtedly a piece of work to be done. There will still be people in the University who either don't know what it is or don't think it's for them. And we need to tackle that. And we're continuing to look at various ways of trying to do that. But so far, so good, I would say, in terms of delivery and measurements.

The UK government, from whom most of this money comes, visited us, visited this building actually in the form of Douglas Ross, the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, a couple of weeks ago. And what was really striking from that meeting was the extent to which they see this deal as a model for other city deals. There are city deals all over the UK. This is the only one where a university really is taking a leading role, and they're very impressed with our measurements and our key performance indicators and they're actually using some of the structures that we've developed around our city deal as a template for other city deals to be measured by. So this is something that I think we should take is a great compliment.

Brexit. So one temptation is to say, oh, the uncertainty is now over. But it's not. The uncertainty is only just begun.

We now know that Brexit is happening. It has happened. It happened at 11 o'clock last night. I gave an interview to German radio on Thursday morning and they asked, one of the questions they ask me is, "What are you going to do at 11 o'clock on Friday night?" And I said, "have a stiff whisky", which is a rather Scotland specific but actually factually correct answer.

But the uncertainty is clearly not over. So we now are in a period of negotiation, which the UK government has set, with an extraordinarily ambitious timescale to be completed within eleven months, something which most people in the EU say would normally take five to seven years. And there is a determination to exit the EU formally at the end of the transition period, which would be the end of this calendar year.

Unfortunately, it is predicted by people that know that we will have a discussion during this year around the prospect of no deal. So you might think that no deal has gone away, but it hasn't. Because if an agreement can't be achieved in that eleven month period, and some say actually it's much shorter than that because any deal has to be ratified by all the member states, so some progress towards a deal probably has to happen within five or six months, let alone eleven. So it could be that we face the prospect of no deal again. I sincerely hope we don't. We have contingency plans to deal with No Deal. And I think Sarah [Smith] said the other day when we were asked about this in a staff meeting that three times the University has been braced for no deal with all sorts of contingency plans as to what it would mean for us. And three times it hasn't happened. But unfortunately there is going to be a fourth. So we have lots of detailed plans, which I won't go into here. But Sarah could answer questions better than me, if anyone does have any questions.

And we're moving, as I said in my introductory remarks, to a phase of coping with what I think is a new reality. Coping effectively with Brexit mitigation. How can we make sure that the University of Edinburgh continues its international activities and continues its global significance in the face of political challenges like Brexit? I'm very confident that we will. There's one very practical implication around students, and that's that the EU students that you saw in one of my previous slides who currently receive a tuition fee underwritten by the Scottish government will lose that. And so we imagine, although we don't know, that we will see a dramatic reduction in numbers of EU students wishing to come to Scotland. We hope that some will still come. We know that a significant proportion of EU students studying in England don't avail themselves of loans, thereby implying that they have the financial means to come and study in England. They will, in future, likely need financial means to come and study in Scotland as well, which currently they don't. But we expect there will be a reduction in EU numbers

For staff. There are those staff that are already here and there are those staff that might never come. I'm equally worried about both of those constituencies. We've made a great deal of efforts to reassure those staff that are here that we're keen to keep them and we're keen to support them in every way we can. And we've got a number of ways of doing that. But I actually worry also about the ones that may feel that they shouldn't go to the UK. They shouldn't come to Scotland because they don't know what the immigration status will be. They don't know how likely that they're able to stay. And so we're doing everything we can to reassure those groups. But clearly, we don't really know who those people are. So that's a more difficult group to identify.

I foresee an interesting year or two for myself and my senior team colleagues and indeed for everybody connected with University of Edinburgh in that we have a Scottish government and a UK government that are not on the best of terms and that are aiming in different directions. We clearly need to have a relationship with both Scottish government and the UK government. And again, we've got ways of trying to make sure that we can do that. And we're building significant new and existing partnerships. I referred earlier on to one where Victor and I met, which was the launch of a new alliance called Una Europa. This is eight universities from eight different regions speaking nine different languages. And the reason is nine is because the University of Helsinki is bilingual and it's a bilingual university in both Finnish and Swedish. So eight different regions, eight extremely high quality universities, of which we're very proud to be one, working together on some quite imaginative schemes, which again I can talk more about if people want me to. But we are restating our European credentials because we feel that we need to do so at this particular time.

I'll speed up a little bit, so Strategy 2030, you've heard about. This is the URL if you want to look at it online: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030> I won't go into great detail about this. I hope you've had a chance to see it. And I know that there was been various consultations with you both during its development and its publication. It's a 10 year strategy document. It has a strong focus on people. This means students, staff, alumni, citizens, anybody. But we've made the point that this is not an institution that can be separated from its people. It's very much a people organisation. And we want to demonstrate how much we care about them and want to value them and include them.

It also contains a very unashamed focus on values. And we've made an attempt to define what we believe the University's values should be. I think this is a Scottish strength, in my opinion. It's one of the things that Scotland is respected for in the world, particularly around educational heritage. But a number of aspects of decency, integrity, respect, behaviours that we wish to see and encourage amongst our members of our community. And of course, we have the ambition for excellence in everything that we do. And I think, importantly, we recognise that, although we're a very significant university, we're by far the biggest and most successful in Scotland. We're one of the very significant ones in the UK and in Europe.

But we can't do things on our own. We have to think in terms of working in collaboration. The world's great problems will only be solved by collaborative working. In the Robotarium, which is just over there, is a collaboration with Heriot Watt, which is another example of the way in which we've got complementary alignment of capability with other universities. Where we're much better at the design end of robotics, and Heriot Watt is much better at the application end. And so putting the two together makes very good sense.

Again, the four areas I won't go through in detail, but a focus on people, of course focuses on research and teaching and learning. Those are our core business and a recognition of our social and civic responsibility. These will shape our activities. The key message really for you today in relation to Strategy 2030 is that we want you to engage with it. We want our alumni community to feel that this is your document and you can contribute to its delivery. We can't, neither I nor any members of the senior team can deliver any of this on our own. We require people in the University community to believe in it and to help us to engage and alumni is a very important part of that, both locally and internationally. You can connect us and help us.

You can provide a home for students. You've heard about the Insights program that has been talked about at this meeting before it and to the Business Committee. That's a program that's entirely dependent on alumni. Where alumni provide the hosts and they provide philanthropic funding to make this scheme work as targeted at the moment, mostly at students from less privileged backgrounds. And it provides them with opportunities somewhere else, either in Edinburgh or in Glasgow or London or internationally. An opportunity they would not otherwise get. Something that we've built around the fact that we've got hundreds of thousands of engaged alumni all over the world. It's a really important aspect of our student offering.

And as I say that we've got 400 years behind us and we can be even better for the next 400 years, although sadly I won't be here to see it. Some of you might if you've discovered the secret.

So just to finish by looking forward a little bit, the focus on people is real. We really mean business here. We really think that some of the ways in which we operate, some of the ways in which we communicate, can be improved. We need to think about what we can do with technology, but we also need to be human and we need to be understanding and respectful and supportive. And I think there are aspects of our function that are very good in this way. But there are some things that we do that can be improved. A focus on health and wellbeing. So rather than the inevitable focus on illness, either mental health disorders or physical health disorders, a real desire to think about prevention. To think about wellbeing. This is relevant to every member of the community. So there are things we can do to encourage wellbeing and hopefully to pre-empt the problems. Of course, when there are problems, we need to be able to respond to them and support them. And you've heard mentioned of the new Health and Wellbeing Centre which will be opened shortly. And this represents a fabulous investment in the community, to try and to make it a better place to live and work and study. Great pieces of work on mental health, both for students and staff and indeed sexual violence, mostly for students, but also students and staff work around the staff experience based on the staff survey that we completed a year and a half ago now. Sarah Smith is leading a piece of work around responding to that survey, but also responding to other evidence that there are areas of our staff engagement that we need to improve. And one aspect of that is that we've appointed staff engagement champions in various parts of the University who are leading some of that work.

Social and civic responsibility. This is about more than climate change and sustainability. But climate change and sustainability and other aspects of ecological threat are very important in that, under that heading, we've been very successful in the Green Gown Awards, which is a set of awards for recognising university practices. Again, we have people, including students and staff throughout the university who are particular champions for social and civic responsibility. And this includes response to the climate emergency, but it also includes other aspects of civic engagement. We've made progress on our widening participation activities. Again, I can say more about that if people want to, but we're ahead of schedule in terms of improving the access to the University for students from less privileged backgrounds in Scotland.

We haven't yet done as much for students from less privileged backgrounds in other parts of the world. And there are one or two really interesting initiatives coming along to try and address that area. And I've already talked about data driven innovation and our commitment to the provision of skills. The example I think you will have heard about before is our work in Newbattle in collaboration with Newbattle High School. We're providing what we believed to be the first secondary school data science qualification in the world where every student that graduates from that school will have a qualification in data science irrespective of where they come to this University or go to any other university. And that's a shining example of the kind of civic engagement that's possible under City Deal.

So I've appealed to you to engage a couple of pieces of information. We have appointed a new Vice Principal for Students. I've talked about this before. It was striking to me that Edinburgh didn't have such a post and I felt that was a gap that needed to be plugged. And we went through the process to sort from a really high quality field and appointed someone called Colm Harman, who you may not have met yet, but

he started in October. He's actually Irish, although he was working in Australia when we recruited him. And he's been here now for whatever it is, three or four months, and has got off to a good start in trying to continue the work that Charlie Jeffery and Gavin Douglas had started before, and a number of other colleagues, around improving aspects of our teaching and learning provision with a particular focus on personal tutor and student support.

Again, I'll go into detail if people want me to. On research we are approaching what's called the Research Excellence Framework or REF. This is an exercise which takes place every six or seven years and is a very sophisticated and complicated device for the assessment of research excellence, which involves peer review of a whole load of subject areas by expert panels. We have to submit the data to that exercise in November of this year and it takes a year before we get the results. But all the signs are that Edinburgh will do well in REF. We did very well last time. The last exercise was in 2014 and every university trials the results differently according to which suits them. But by the measure which is most widely accepted as being real, Edinburgh was placed fourth in the UK in terms of our research excellence. We hope to achieve fourth again. That would be a triumph if we did. It's unlikely we'll achieve third, although there are some people in the optimistic mode that think we might. But if we manage to maintain our position in an environment where everybody's improving, that will be quite something.

And as one yardstick of that, if we look at the achievement of research awards, I told you that it's roughly 300 million in the last academic year. It's been better year on year on year. The awards success is improving. It can't carry on going up forever because some of these awards are five year awards. And obviously, if you've just got a five year award, you don't apply again for another three or four years. But at the moment, all the signs are that our research achievement is going in the right direction.

The size and shape heading. So this is referred to a bit in a strategy document, but we've done a piece of work that looks at the overall size of the university. I've always already referred to it as a large organisation. The short version of the outcome of that piece of work is that we think that ten years from now the University of Edinburgh will be approximately the same size as it is now. It'll be slightly bigger, but it won't grow at the same rate that it's grown over the last 15 years. But the shape within that might be slightly different. There might be a shift from undergrad to postgrad. I pointed out how predominantly undergrad we are and we think that that probably needs to change. Brexit undoubtedly will have an impact on that because we expect there to be fewer EU students and we don't know whether that will allow us to recruit more Scottish students or more other UK students. But the signs are probably not. And so that will actually probably reduce the size of the undergraduate population.

But we expect there to be some postgraduate growth, particularly in postgraduate taught programmes. Capital prioritisation has been an interesting exercise that we've been taking, going through for about a year and a half. And then we had a senior executive away day yesterday. And one of the points I made at the introduction of that meeting is I want to shift the narrative a bit from talking about all the things that we can't afford to celebrating the fact that we can afford massive capital investment. We are in a much better position than any other Scottish university and a much better position than almost any other UK university in our ability to invest in our campus. We're not as flush as we'd like to be. We can't do all the things we'd like to do. But this building, again, is an example of what is possible. And there are a number of other examples around the University. So we're really in a very strong position. But we have had to be responsible about deciding what we can and can't afford. And that has led to disappointment for some members of the University. But I want to concentrate on all the positives and all the fact that we are able to invest in a way that virtually no other university can, and we should be very proud of that.

U.S. China relations. In this building is Huawei. Huawei is a company which you'll have read about in various aspects of the media. Also in this building is Cisco, which is sort of the American equivalent of Huawei and they work together in the same building. We have partnerships with organisations from the United States and from China and from a number of other countries. And we try to exist in a world which is not sullied by

politics. But, inevitably, one can't ignore what's going on in the relationship between United States and China. I really sincerely hope that the day never comes when universities like this one have to choose to either be friendly with the United States or China, and it's unable to continue both. But some of the utterances that come particularly from the White House, might suggest that we will be forced to make that choice. At the moment, we've got enormous dependency on China for students as I've already said. We have some very substantial partnerships in China and some more under discussion. We also have very significant relationships in the United States. We need to think about other parts of the world. And I've mentioned India. There's also Indonesia. And then there's my personal hobbyhorse, which is Africa, which we discussed at the last meeting of the General Council. There are other major parts of the world in which we need to engage and we should try and do so without being governed by political change. But clearly, we have to operate in a legal and ethical framework, which is governed by some aspects of U.S. China relations. And again, I suspect there might be questions about that and I'm very happy to ask them.

And finally, coronavirus. So as you know, I lived in Hong Kong for four years. Hong Kong is still scarred by SARS. SARS stands for Serious Adult Respiratory Syndrome, and it describes a previous coronavirus. A coronavirus is a family of viruses that causes the common cold. There are hundreds of them, and most of them are not particularly dangerous. SARS was a virus in 2003, which was notable for the fact that it killed young, previously healthy adults, whereas most viruses, particularly influenza, pick off the weak, they pick off the old and frail and the young, and they pick off people with other chronic disease. SARS was different. It killed perfectly healthy people and that was one of the reasons why it was so frightening. This coronavirus started off looking as if it was the same, but actually the evidence is, firstly, that the case fatality rates are quite low, certainly lower than SARS, higher than influenza, but lower than SARS. And secondly, most of the deaths have been amongst people with other health issues, either age at the extremes, very young or very old, or other chronic health disorders. So at the moment, it looks a bit more like flu than it does like SARS.

But clearly, there's still a lot of uncertainty. And clearly, with the nature of international travel, the ability for any virus to spread is now facilitated by the way the world is currently working. You saw this with Ebola in West Africa a few years ago. Ebola used to be largely managed by the fact that it occurred in rural communities in Africa. By nature of lack of travel, eventually you either die or you become immune. And that's the way viruses used to exist. Now because of the ability to spread everywhere, the viruses can get access to whole new populations very quickly. And that's one of the things we're seeing with coronavirus. We have taken a decision to recall our students that are currently studying in China. That's ongoing and still the subject of some controversy.

But it's following Foreign Office advice and we're advising staff not to travel to China at the moment. And I don't know how long those restrictions will need to carry on. We're trying to be evidence based. We have a number of experts in the University on this virus and other viruses and indeed on public health more generally. They are feeding into government advice. So we're listening to the advice from the Scottish government, from the UK government and indeed from the World Health Organisation. So we're trying to be responsible about this. We're trying not to overreact. But clearly the world is in a situation at the moment where it doesn't really yet know whether this is going to be a major public health threat or not. So, Rector, that's where I'll finish. I think the conclusion is that the University of Edinburgh has much to be proud of, and its alumni and its General Council should be proud of being members of this community. And I know you are. As I've said, both financially reputationally and in terms of strategy, I think we're in as strong a position as any other UK university. There are these significant external events. I haven't mentioned the industrial action, which Stuart mentioned in his presentation, but it's about to happen again, that those issues underlying the disputes around pensions and pay are far from resolved. And so it's quite likely that we'll see more industrial action, although we're still hoping that we might be able to avoid that. And they're still very active negotiations going on to try and avoid it. That's one of the external events. Brexit is another, but we're looking forward confidently. Strategy 2030 sets the agenda, sets the principles

and the aims. But as I've said repeatedly, it won't help unless people like you believe it and help us to deliver. And with that, I'll stop. Thanks.

Thank you very much for that comprehensive report. The meeting is open for members to make comment or to ask questions from the Principal and also we will take any online, any e-mails that come in online. So open invitation to those of you watching this meeting being live streamed to participate as well.

Andrew Anderson, MBA, 1994. I'd like to ask the principal about something which he didn't mention explicitly, which is academic freedom. And I was very concerned to read an article in The Guardian on the 14th of last month. I have a copy here, if anyone's interested, which discussed threats to academic freedom, which particularly affect women, female academics who are interested in the issues of gender diversity and the like. I was particularly concerned to read that in this university in December, two events were cancelled or postponed. One of them was a research seminar on schools and gender diversity. The organisers reluctantly agreed to what they understood was a postponement rather than a cancellation, essentially because the university effectively was saying, we can't protect you. We can't provide a safe environment for this event to take place. Now, I can imagine a university somewhere in the world which didn't have live webcasts of its meetings. I can't imagine is a self-respecting university, which doesn't protect and if necessary, actively defend academic freedom. So I'd be very interested in the Principal's response to this.

Peter Vink BCom 1966. Fascinating to hear you approach about these things that should take place after Brexit. And this morning I was talking to a cousin of mine in the Netherlands who told me that Oxford wanted to work together with Munich and Cambridge with Berlin. And he then told me that Edinburgh, was rumoured to want to work with Leiden University, which is a fantastic university. And I wonder if you would like to comment on that.

Principal: Two very different questions here. So let me deal with them in the order in which they were asked.

So the topic of academic freedom is something which we spend a lot of time debating and thinking about.

In my previous job, it was a topic I had to deal with almost every day of the week. And I would say a couple of things in principle, and then I might ask Sarah Smith to comment on some of the detail around the particular events that you refer to, because Sarah chairs the group, which is called the Compliance Group, which considers events on campus, and she can say more about the detail. The principle is as follows. The University of Edinburgh recognises that academic freedom is an absolute sine qua non for a university such as us. We know that, I don't feel a need to say it because I think it should be obvious. It's in the strategy document because we felt we needed to state it. But actually a university like this one cannot function if it's not a place for rational debate, for the discussion of complicated and difficult issues, including those issues that might cause offence to some other member of the community. We have to be a place where those debates can happen.

I've referred a number of times in things that I've written and spoken about to something called the Stone Report, which was written by the University of Chicago, about three or four years ago. What the Stone Report goes into is exactly this topic. It's about what a university should stand for, what the boundaries are, and the fact that you don't come to a university to necessarily be comfortable, you come to a university to be challenged. And that challenge is got to take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect within the law and within boundaries of decency. And so we believe that here we may produce our own version of something like the Stone Report in order to restate that. Personally, I'd be disappointed if anyone thinks that there's any doubt about our commitment to academic freedom. But if we need to restate that, we will do so. The particular issues around the meetings that you referred to are part of a very complicated and sensitive and difficult debate around gender and around the differences of opinion between members of

the transsexual community and some members of the feminist community. And this has been something of a revelation to me. In the years that I was away from the UK this was not something that I knew about. And when I came back, people often asked me what surprised me since you came back to the UK. One of things that surprised me is the extraordinary intensity of this debate. I hadn't in my previous life thought of feminists as being biased or somehow discriminatory, but feminists are now sometimes portrayed as being discriminatory in a way which is new to me. So this is a debate I've had to learn about. We do fortunately have a lot of expertise in the University around the subject. The particular events that were postponed, as I understand it, were postponed rather than cancelled, were done so in discussion with the University and the discussion with the organizers and Sarah might want to say more about those specific events.

Sarah Smith, University Secretary: Absolutely. And I would certainly reiterate what Peter's just said about the intensity of emotion and upset that this particular issue has caused for our University community over quite some months now.

There was an event last year which was considered by some to be tremendously contentious and tremendously upsetting, which had a number of speakers giving the gender critical feminist view, which is the view The Guardian is talking about, is it being sufficiently articulated?

We did enable that event to take place. Where we were able to enable that event to take place was by putting in some quite clear arrangements which we thought about very carefully, about how to have a chair that would ensure that it was carried out appropriately, how to ensure security for people who were speaking. And that event, on the whole, went off pretty smoothly in the sense that people were able to speak and were able to say the things that that Guardian article is saying that people find difficult to say. Nevertheless, members of our trans community in the University were extremely upset that that event took place. The whole of the committee of the Staff Pride Network resigned. There was huge feeling of being unsafe that was being articulated to us as a result of this event taking place. So I'd say it engendered very, very strong emotions from different members of our community.

There was then another event which gender critical feminists wanted to take place before Christmas. We approved it to go ahead and we again talked about how do we enable this to happen? Because when we meet in the University Compliance Group this concept of academic freedom is absolutely at the top of our minds. And the question is nearly always, we know that this event will cause significant upset to some members of our community, how do we nevertheless enable upsetting things to be said? We're a university and we need to ensure that can happen. We worked with the organizer in the same way. We talked about how we would have security. We talked about how we would have an appropriate Chair. In the end the organizer concluded, in discussion with her head of school, that she felt unsafe. She felt she couldn't go ahead with it. And that's exactly what that article was about. So she postponed it. Privately I'm sorry that she postponed it because you know, we did have these arrangements. There was some potential misuse of the booking system, which we said we would work with the organizer about to try to make sure that anybody who was booking genuinely wanted to attend and was there for genuine reasons and that it was a real person booking and they were offering to help with that. Nevertheless, that's a decision the organizer took in consultation with the head of school. And that, of course, is their right. It was a postponement. And we said that we will work with the organizer when she wants to, if she wants to, arrange another one. There's been a lot of correspondence, a lot of engagement with the organizers since then.

So there isn't a magic solution and the Chaplaincy have also been playing a brilliant part in this in terms of listening to people who have very, very strongly competing perspectives, and we will continue to try to work with all members of our community to ensure that events can take place, that we know that some members of our community will find deeply offensive and upsetting because we won't treat that as a criteria for not having an event. But we will try to work to ensure the event can take place and that people feel safe. So that's a very honest answer to where we are.

Principal: Thank you very much, Sarah. The second question was about the response to Brexit and the particular question about Leiden. So the eight universities which are Uno Europa, do not include Leiden, although I don't think I'm being indiscreet in saying this, but Leiden would like to join that alliance and there's a process of discussion going on with Leiden. But there is a feeling that the alliance is already big enough and that we should work with that group rather than adding anybody else to it. But the very fact that Leiden's interested, I think, tells you something about the stature of the alliance. Separately to that Leiden's a member of LERU, the League of European Research Universities, and in that there are five British members: Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial, UCL and us of the twenty three I think that are in LERU.

And so within LERU we have a very good relationship with Leiden. And in fact, we also have a bipartite relationship with Leiden where we're talking about joint PHD, jointly supervised PHDs and one which we have with a number of other European partners. So what I would say about Leiden is that they are a fabulous university which has particular strengths in Africa studies, and the subject of your last meeting, which is another subject that we're good at and interested in. We may well develop in collaboration with Leiden. They are a partner in LERU, they're not at the moment a partner in Una Europa, although that's a possibility for the future. But it's one example of a fabulous European university, a continental European university, that wants to work with us. And we're very grateful for that. And we're very keen to work in return with them.

Brian Smith, MA 1966: Could I pick up your two remarks about Africa that you made in response to questions? Because when you presented the breakdown of where people came from, China at the top, USA next, there were no African countries mentioned there at all. I wonder what percentage of African students do actually come if one begins to add together some of the smaller African countries and see where they might be on that that list. Or are we just not attracting students from Africa?

Okay. My favourite subject. Thank you, Brian. Very happy to talk about it.

Kirsty MacGregor, MA 1981: I have a related question, which is that I don't see any Russian students on the list above. And you haven't mentioned Russia, which seems it does have quite a significant impact on what's happening on the geopolitical frontier.

Principal: Okay. So those are related questions. So if any country doesn't appear on here, it's because the total number of students at the University of Edinburgh is less than one hundred and five. And so it must be true for Russia and every African country. If you took Africa as a summation, and I'm very fond of saying that, Africa is not a country. Africa is a continent, a very heterogeneous group of countries. But if you were to take Africa as a summation, my guess would be, and it is only a guess, is that it would get in somewhere down here as a source of a number of students, but any individual country within that wouldn't.

The most exciting aspect of our engagement with Africa, I think, is our engagement with the MasterCard Foundation programme. So MasterCard, which as you know, is a Canadian credit card company, has this foundation which supports education for Africa, brings students from most of Africa, but particularly sub-Saharan Africa, to Western universities, and funds them entirely to do their degree and funds undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. There are only two universities outside North America that are part of that programme. Most of universities are in Canada or the United States. The only two outside North America are us and Sciences Po in Paris and we have a cohort of African students. I think this year's cohort was about 65 from all over Africa. Mostly it's sub-Saharan Africa studying here, fully funded by the MasterCard program. That's brilliant, but it's relatively small numbers. They're very highly selected. They're students with leadership capability, and so as well as their studies, they get a leadership development programme. They become part of an international network. It's a fabulous programme, but it's small. And so the question for us and indeed other universities that have aspirations in Africa, is how can we achieve scale? How can we make ourselves relevant to more students in Africa? Quite a lot of this can be done online. And indeed, quite a lot of our two million, two and a half million online students are from Africa.

But even in parts of Africa there isn't access to the computer technology that would allow you to participate online. So we are thinking about this. The reason I keep mentioning it is because it's something I'm particularly interested in. I've got my own experience in Africa and I've got a particular desire to see places like Edinburgh relevant to Africa. And we are working on it. We've got a very interesting three way partnership with Vanderbilt, which is in Nashville, Tennessee, and WITS the University of Witwatersrand, which is in Johannesburg, because both of those other two universities are very good at data science and very good at health. And because of our expertise in data science and health, we make a very good partnership. So that's going well. Vanderbilt are due to visit us in a couple of week's time. And so there's a very interesting set of university alliances that may help. We're working on it but at the moment, I would say in terms of student numbers, we're very dependent on the MasterCard programme for our African students and fabulous students, they are too. I mean, obviously, I have quite a bit to do with them because I just love Africa and Africans.

In relation to Russia I have absolutely no experience of Russia. Russia's a complicated country to engage with. I mean, Russia has the highest university enrolment of any nation on the planet. It's almost 100 percent. So almost every secondary school kid in Russia goes to university. Now, that does inevitably mean that the quality of university experience is quite variable. And so engaging with Russian universities is difficult. There is this university call Skolkovo, which I engaged with when I worked in Hong Kong, although I've never been there. But they're a very outward looking, very western sort of focused university. And it's possible that we might engage with them. There's been a little bit of contact with them. But Russia is a bit of an unknown quantity, I think, both politically and in terms of its role in the world. It depends on who you talk to. Russia's either a dying power that we can forget about or a rising power that we need to be very conscious of. And I think, you know, I'm not an expert, but you're right. It's a deficiency at the moment. It's a big country, a big population with some educational credentials that we don't engage with very much.

Alan Brown, MBChB 1963: Peter, thank you for your excellent presentation. You mentioned the new Vice Principal for Students. Could you expand on some of his ideas? Because as you know, NSS is an area which we have not been good at for many years.

David Houston, PhD Mathematical Physics 1976: You mentioned that you do have a lot of capital just at the moment available for infrastructure and so on. Could I encourage you to use some of it to help students get around the various campus sites, particularly of course KB which is where I was when I studied here, and to use some of the innovation that perhaps we've seen in this building and elsewhere, rather than just pester the Council for extra buses or something. Think about things like having a centre here where KB studying students could engage with their courses or something, something more innovative than trying to lay on buses and things. It seems to very unsuccessful.

Principal: So Alan's question about the role of the VP of students and I guess more generally our response to national student survey and other aspects, other measures of student satisfaction. Let me deal with that first.

The VP of Students has a reasonably broad portfolio to be responsible for everything to do with students. So it's not prescriptive, but clearly that includes both what happens in the classroom, it includes accommodation, and it includes what happens outside the classroom. And I suppose if he wants to compartmentalise it and think about it in those three ways. So there's something about living, there's something about studying and there's something about the outside classroom experience. So he was working most recently with the University of Sydney. And that's not why we appointed him. But it so happens that the University of Sydney is one of the universities in the world that's done the most to address the complexities of curriculum. I have particular admiration for a woman, Pip Pattison, who is the Deputy Vice Chancellor in Sydney, that Colm Harmon worked with. And she is invited around the world to talk about the work that they've done in Sydney, reducing what was an extraordinarily complex curriculum

to one that's easier to understand and easier to deliver. And I happen to believe that the University of Edinburgh could learn from that. And by importing someone that's worked there, that gives him a distinct advantage as well as his other significant credentials, one of which is that his professional background is in the economics of higher education. He was head of School of Economics in Sydney when he was first recruited. So he has the right professional understanding of the relationship between income and students.

I could talk about the national student survey all day and I won't because I've talked about it before. But it is one measure of student satisfaction. There is a lot of criticism of its construction and its objectivity and how reliable a measure it is. And there would be some that say, on that slide I showed says there are ten times as many suitably qualified students applying for Edinburgh as we are able to take. You might say, well, so what's the problem then in that case? You know, we've got all these talented people want to come here. Well, the problem is we're not doing our job properly unless we provide those 6000 that do come with the optimal student experience. So we are not complacent about this. And we're also not saying that because of this we don't have a problem. We do have a problem. And our problems always existed. Ever since the National Student Survey started Edinburgh has done poorly. So this is not a new problem and it's one that lots of clever, hardworking people have tried to solve. I'm added my name to that list and I hope that in years to come there may be some progress. Colm Harmon is a very significant addition to my ability to do that, but he's not on his own, this is actually a conjoined effort right across the University at every level, both academic and professional services. And again, I hope we will see progress. There are some quite promising early signs but this is an oil tanker. Student satisfaction will take years to turn around. And it may well be that it'll be my successor or my successor's successor that is in a position to judge whether the things that I led when I was here actually made any difference.

So the second question was, I think around transport, but also around integration of different bits of the university, if I understood it correctly. So this is revenue spend, not capital. I don't need to tell you that. So this is not the same as the capital prioritisation, which is largely about buildings and big investments. This is revenue spend. This is how do we spend our money every recurring year? All I can say is that we think about it in every project we plan, the implications for movement of students. Kings Buildings is a particular case in point and there's been a lot of publicity around the shuttle bus, which was a bus provided for students and staff, originally for students but actually very popular with staff as well, to bring students from King's buildings into the city centre. It's oversubscribed. It's not equitable in the sense that other bits of the University, and the one that's always cited is Easter Bush but it's also true for the BioQuarter. Other bits of the University don't have the same service. So we want to be equitable. We commissioned an external expert to study transport around the city for us and to make some recommendations. One of the recommendations was that we should improve our engagement with public transport. You say that engagement with the buses has been unsuccessful. That's true. But it's not an end of the story because we're a major customer.

And if you take the four universities together in Edinburgh, we are major customers of Edinburgh's public transport system and we have clout and we're trying to use that clout to get some concessions from them. So I think there are improvements we can make to our access to public transport. We've also, if you've seen the Just Eat bikes, I must admit when I got enthusiastic about the bike scheme, I didn't know it's going to be called the Just Eat bike scheme. But there was this proposal to provide bikes. At the moment they are pedal bikes, although electric bikes to cope with Edinburgh's hills are coming and we're a pilot site for that scheme. So we've got some of the stations around our sites to try and encourage the use of bicycles. Now, clearly, Edinburgh's not a particularly bicycle friendly city, although when I made that remark to the City Council I was slapped down, because apparently Edinburgh does have pretty good cycle lanes and whatnot. But if I was cycling around Edinburgh I'd be very worried about the potholes and the hills. But anyway, we are encouraging people who are able to use bicycles. We're trying to engage with the public transport network. But we're thinking about transport as an implication of every development we make, particularly around student accommodation. We want to increase our stock of student accommodation. It cannot be in the city centre. It's going to have to be further out because there just isn't the place to do it. And so

therefore, building somewhere and thinking of students living there without thinking about the transport implications would be a planning disaster. And we're not going to make that mistake. So we're very much thinking about it. It is a big student population and staff population dispersed across the city. We have five major sites and we tend to think about those five major site. But we want the provision of transport to be equitable across all of those sites rather than focussed on any one of them.

Rector: Thank you very much, Peter. Can I remind everybody, people who are both here and who are watching the meeting, that all the documents that the Principal has referred to are available online and if questions do occur to you, do send them in any way, as it were, it's an open door and they can be answered by the Principal or relevant staff. The slides that the Principal has used will also be uploaded on the General Council website. So they'll be available for you to refer back to as well. I would like to thank the Principal for the time taken to answer those very varied questions and contributions General Council members have made. Thank you.

B Presentation of the Report of the Business Committee

at the General Council Meeting on 1 February 2020

Convener of the Business Committee: Professor Stuart Macpherson

Rector, Principal, Members of the General Council and guests.

I am particularly pleased to welcome General Council members present and especially those who have not attended a Half Yearly meeting before. Mention must be made of Stuart Blackie who has travelled from London to join us and also Gabriel Goldberg and Victor Loewenstein who have come from Brussels. Those three members are attending for the second year in a succession. I hope we can assume that they found last year's meeting informative and I thank them for making the effort to join us again. Also I am especially delighted to welcome those who are not present. I need to explain that strange statement. Last year we webcast the meeting to a range of European locations and looking back it seems that as many General Council members viewed the meeting on line as were present in the room. As you have heard from the Rector this year we are relaying to a greater number of overseas locations. We would like to further extend this practice but time differences make that challenging.

I start my report by commenting on international matters. As has previously been reported we have recently set up a new standing committee to consider the University's international engagement. I'm sure you will hear from Peter later just how important the international aspect is to the University. Krystyna Szumelukowa has enthusiastically accepted the chair of this new committee. She arranged the first meeting with Alan Mackay, Deputy Vice-Principal International and Director of Edinburgh Global. In addition the committee identified one of its early priorities as a need to support international students and staff. For that reason the committee met with Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience, Eleri Connick a new graduate who has been employed by the University as a Student Communities Project Officer and Daniel Mutia, a Mastercard Scholar from Kenya. A meeting has subsequently been held with Eleri and current students to explore ways in which General Council members can assist with the orientation of students who are new to Edinburgh. I am very keen that this initiative develops as I know many General Council members would be willing to assist in whatever way they can. I recognise that members who are resident around Edinburgh have helped in the past and along with others would be be willing to participate in the future. The committee would warmly welcome those living further afield to be involved as well. In this regard I would like to mention that this past Christmas the University arranged a lunch and dinner for students who were not returning home for the festive season. Many members of the Business Committee were pleased to host tables at those events.

I would like to congratulate Business Committee members for their commitment and also mention that we have continued our record of 100% representation at graduations and formal St Giles' Cathedral services.

Members give much more time to the University than simply attending Business Committee and subcommittee meetings.

Early in this current session the Business Committee had a presentation from Tracey Slaven regarding the University of Edinburgh's recently published Strategy 2030. You will be pleased to know that this makes explicit reference to alumni as part of the University community. Tracey had previously met with the Committee during the development of this document. This is now available on the University's website for those who have not already seen it.

As I have explained to this meeting previously the majority of the work of the Business Committee is conducted in its Standing Committees led by their Chairs. This format continues.

The Academic Standing Committee continues to be most ably led by Professor Steve Hillier. Steve's top priorities for this academic session are Education Technology, ethnicity and faith, and student and staff well-being. At their first meeting the Standing Committee met Professor Sian Bayne, Assistant Principal Digital Education and learned that the University of Edinburgh leads UK research intensive universities in the application of digital technology to education. Two other facts of interest were that our Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have now attracted 2.5 million students worldwide and that one-third of our taught postgraduate courses are now delivered on-line. Just last week the Committee received a presentation from the University Chaplain, the Reverend Dr Harriet Harris. Dr Harris's presentation comes at an important time with the opening of the new Wellbeing Centre in Bristo Square.

I want to offer my particular gratitude to Professor David Munro who has led his Constitutional Standing Committee through a review of the Constitutional Arrangements for the working of the General Council and its Business Committee. These documents were last updated nine years ago. This enormous amount of very valuable work was prompted by the changes made to the University Ordinances arising from the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act of 2016. David's aim was also to make the document, which runs to forty pages, more accessible and readable. The end result was approved by the Business Committee on 10th October last year. Relating to their work are two motions which we will deal with later in this agenda. I trust the meeting will approve these motions. The first relates to the timing of our Half Yearly meetings. The rule for these dates has been unduly prescriptive. Now that the graduation season has become so extended conflicts with our summer meeting exist. There are, I believe 21 graduation ceremonies this coming summer. The second motion is to recognise in the rules the change from election to appointment of General Council Court Assessors. That change was approved by the General Council at this meeting in February last year. As you are aware the new process has already been utilised in last year's appointment of Jock Millican and Sarah Wolffe.

The Public Affairs Standing Committee is chaired by Sophie Marshall. This committee is responsible for the General Council's communication strategy and has been involved in the reorganisation of the Council's website. In addition the responsibility of the committee is to approve the formal meetings of the Council. The committee was pleased to note that last summer's Half Yearly Meeting which explored the University's relationship with Africa, was a great success. Continuing and expanding the international theme, the plans for this coming summer, which the Secretary will describe later, are for a similar format dealing with China. We are delighted to note that Peter has agreed to take part.

The Public Affairs Standing Committee has so far heard from Rosheen Wallace the Edinburgh University Student Association's Vice President (Community). Rosheen spoke about the success of the Edinburgh Student Housing Cooperative. As student accommodation in Edinburgh is expensive the Cooperative aims to provide students with affordable housing. EUSA would very much like to see the scheme expanded. Grant Spence and Kerry Balkwell spoke to the Committee about Platform One, the alumni and current student networking platform, which allows people to connect and share skills. They also discussed the Sharing Things podcast and the Insights Programme. Sophie would be pleased to discuss any of these with members later or over lunch.

The Finance and Services Standing Committee is now chaired by William Duncan. As with the other committees it has based its agenda on the main themes in Strategy 2030. These are people, research, teaching and learning and social and civic responsibility. The first meeting was with James Saville the University's Director of Human Resources. Mr Saville discussed two major topics. Firstly the industrial action which was at that time underway. He pointed out that there were two sources of grievance - remuneration and pension arrangements especially the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). He made us aware that solutions need to be found nationally and that Edinburgh acting alone could not resolve the issues. The second meeting was with Lee Hamill, the Director of Finance. He discussed annual accounts for 2019. These are again available on the University website. A future meeting will take place with Anne Richards who has come to the end of her long and distinguished term of office as Vice Convener of Court. Hearing Anne's views is considered so valuable that this meeting has been opened to all members of the Business Committee. A final meeting for the session will be with the Director of Estates.

As members will have noted the most senior individuals in the University continue to accept invitations to share views with Business Committee members. I wish to commend them for this and to thank them on your behalf for their very willing cooperation with us.

Finally, can I make a personal comment. In my view the current Business Committee is a cohesive, interested and constructive forum and I wish to thank all members for that. I am well aware that this is not the case in all universities. I have been very encouraged by the high degree of interest amongst General Council members in standing for membership of the Business Committee and am delighted to see valued colleagues re-elected as well as looking forward to welcoming new members.

Rector. Many thanks. That completes my Half Yearly report.

Any member who does not have web access may request a copy of *Annex* to the *Billet* from the General Council Office:

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