



**AGENDA for the Business Committee Meeting**  
**on Thursday 7 December 2023 at 5.15pm**  
**in ECCI, Infirmary Street, Edinburgh**

1. Welcome and Apologies
  2. Minutes of the Meeting of 12 October 2023 Paper 1
  3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of 12 October 2023
  4. Topics for consideration arising from the Standing Committee meetings
    - a. Academic Standing Committee Papers 2 and 3
    - b. Constitutional Standing Committee Paper 4
    - c. Finance & Services Standing Committee Paper 5
    - d. International Standing Committee Papers 6 and 7
    - e. Public Affairs Standing Committee Papers 8 and 9
  5. Observations by General Council Assessors  
Agenda for University Court meeting on 4 December 2023 Paper 10 TO FOLLOW
  6. Ordinance 186 – consultation with GC about proposed changes to GC membership Paper 11
  7. Marking and Assessment Boycott – up date Paper 12
  8. Report from the Secretary of the General Council Paper 13
  9. Any other competent business
  10. Date of the next meeting
- Notice of any questions under item 8 and of any matters which Members may wish to raise under item 9, should be given to the Secretary and Convener not less than 24 hours before the meeting.

**Minutes of the Business Committee Meeting held on Thursday 12 October 2023  
5.15pm, Training and Skills Room, Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation (ECCI)**

<b>Present</b>	Dr William Duncan, Secretary of the General Council	
	Sir Philip Mawer, Convener of the Business Committee	
	Mr Gordon Cairns, Vice-Convener of the Business Committee	
	The Rt. Hon. Douglas Alexander	Ms Kate Hawley
	Mr Arron Ashton	Professor Stephen Hillier
	Professor Alice Brown	Ms Kirsty MacGregor (online)
	Ms Manya Buchan	Professor Francis McManus
	Lady Joyce Caplan	Mr Jock Millican (online)
	Ms Ann Cormack	Dr Bruce Nelson
	Ms Candice Donnelly	Professor Graeme Reid
	Ms Frances Dow	Mr Devin Scobie (online)
	Sheriff Principal Alastair Dunlop (online)	Rt. Rev Brian Smith
	Ms Elisabeth Feldstein (online)	Ms Krystyna Szumelukowa
	Dr Mary Gunn (online)	Lady Sarah Wolffe (online)
	<b>In attendance</b>	Mr Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy and Advancement, and Director of Development and Alumni (D & A)
Ms Alison MacLeary, Assistant Secretary of the General Council		

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Convener welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the session, particularly the newly elected members of the Business Committee - Manya Buchan, Ann Cormack and Mary Gunn - and Joyce Caplan returning to the Committee on a co-opted basis until 2024.

Apologies had been received from John Clifford and Almira Delibegovic-Broome.

The Convener invited Chris Cox (CC) to talk about the current priorities for D & A and its relationship with the work of the General Council.

**2. Presentation from Chris Cox, VP Philanthropy and Advancement, Director of D & A**

- CC began by thanking members of the Business Committee (BC) for their commitment to the critical role of the General Council (GC) in ensuring that graduates have a genuine voice in the governance of the University. He acknowledged that not every institution in Scotland has such a body, or representation through to its Board of Governors, and this is one of the real strengths of the University;
- The core activity of D & A is to work with colleagues across the institution to involve donors and alumni in taking forward the University's important agendas;
- Its aim is summarised in its mission statement "connecting for good" and is central to the University's Strategy 2030, and also ties in with the work of the GC;
- D & A's purpose is to help alumni and friends of the University to shape its future by supporting and inspiring students and researchers to make the world a better place;

- A record £60m was committed in philanthropic giving last year and CC is hopeful that this will be matched this year;
- Current priorities - 4 Main Headings (or Pillars):

### **Alumni and the University Community**

- An increasingly large part of the role of D & A is to make sure that alumni aren't seen as some kind of separate group from the rest of the University but as integral to the University's local and global community;
- D & A is constantly looking at new and innovative ways to bring alumni together with students, staff and other stakeholders of the University, e.g. through online initiatives such as Platform One, and to give alumni a voice in present and future decisions, welcoming their views on a range of issues;
- D & A's communications plan focuses on engagement and building a stronger sense of a single community, which can be challenging in a large and devolved institution;
- It provides news and updates from the University to celebrate its rich history with alumni all over the world and also raise awareness with staff and students about some of the exciting work and extraordinary breakthroughs that have happened, as well as fostering a sense of pride in representing and being part of a world leading institution;
- It is critical to ensure that there is consultation across the University community on big changes and that alumni are involved in this.

### **Community Educational Access**

- D & A's work is central to supporting local and global scholarship programmes for students from less advantaged backgrounds with academic potential. E.g. the GC Prince Philip Fund is part of the University's widening access scheme;
- Another strand of activity is the Mastercard Foundation and other programmes in Africa and beyond, e.g. CC had recently met the first HK Scholar supported by the Hong Kong Foundation;
- Ongoing work was being undertaken to allow 500-1,000 students to benefit from the Insights Programme, which is related to career development, hosted by alumni around the world and open to every Widening Participation student across the University;
- D & A had been central to the fundraising partnership for the IntoUniversity programme, in conjunction with the University of Glasgow. Based in Craigmillar, this works with local schools to encourage pupils to make the most of their potential. CC noted that 2,700 schoolchildren have already benefitted from the joint programme across the two cities. The majority of students coming through the centres may not end up coming to either Edinburgh or Glasgow.

### **Research for Public Good**

- A very large repeat gift from the Simons Foundation in New York had recently been confirmed for outstanding work on autism, particularly research into rare forms of autism led by Peter Kind and Adrian Bird;
- Promoting giving to research programmes was resulting in a real impact from philanthropy across a variety of subject areas including health, climate and artificial intelligence, and had a positive role in supporting PhD students and global partnerships;
- D & A was working with Edinburgh Global to meet with alumni, donors and universities such as Cornell University and the University of California-Davis, which is one of three universities in the world with an outstanding Vet and Medical School.

### Transformational Education

- Curriculum Transformation Project – CC is leading on the external engagement group for the transformation programme;
- Challenging to find ways for donors and alumni to engage in some of the more intractable elements of student experience – the most likely was through mentoring programmes;
- D & A staff were working with individual Schools to bring alumni back as speakers in specific subject areas as part of their own programmes;
- Lesley McAra is leading the programme to involve alumni in experiential learning at scale - engaging expertise from across the alumni body to be involved in the delivery of cross disciplinary courses looking at AI, climate change etc. A supporting mechanism that will enable thousands of students every year to have the opportunity of involvement in this programme will need a lot of investment;
- D & A are also working across the University to promote genuine life-long learning opportunities for alumni.

### Points arising from Discussion of the Presentation

- A list of questions had been sent to CC in advance of the meeting (see Appendix 1), some of which had been covered during the presentation;
- The main global training body for the work of D & A is CASE (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education);
- Chris Cox is involved in teaching in the CASE Global Academy, which brings through the next generation of advancement leaders and agrees best practice;
- Staff Exchanges – a colleague had recently spent a month at the University of British Columbia and colleagues from overseas visit UoE to exchange ideas;
- There is learning to be had from the US model, which inculcates a sense of pride and belonging across the entire student journey and places value on sport, but CC noted that:
  - more public funding per capita goes into universities in the US than happens in the UK
  - UoE does not do legacy admissions, which drives a lot of fundraising in US universities
  - UoE and the U.K. more broadly seek to lead on due diligence in donor fundraising in a way that US universities are only beginning to address
- D & A have a KPI target of around 15% annual growth in philanthropic income across the University and have managed to meet that over the years;
- There is a need to rebuild the breadth of the donor base as some losses have occurred as a result of the Covid pandemic, staff turnover, cost of living rises, etc.;
- The GC could assist in identifying the right indicators (KPIs) for an engaged, motivated and supportive alumni body, so that these could be built into the University's overall Strategy;
- There are more than 300k alumni worldwide and D & A are in contact with about 80% of that number;
- D & A work closely with a dedicated group of around 150 key volunteers leading alumni groups and clubs around the world and are working to increase and build on that network;
- There are approx. 3,000 regular and loyal important donors; also volunteers to support the students and alumni as ambassadors to the University;



- One feature of the D & A strategy was to focus energies on building a group of 20-30k alumni who are particularly motivational and will have a positive impact on students and researchers;
- Improving the student experience:-
  - CC reported a huge response to a reception organised by D & A in conjunction with the Doctoral College for all incoming PhD students, in order to facilitate a sense of belonging and commitment to the university in the future;
  - Challenge is to take these types of events across the University to bring people together;
  - CC noted concern over NSS results and how this is variable across the university in terms of the student experience in areas such as assessment and feedback;
- The report of the University's Racism Review will be available in December 2024 and there will be a process of consultation, including with the Business Committee, in the run up to that;
- This will be a thorough review looking in depth at the long history of the University and will include issues such as financial reparations and the influence of racial science;
- CC reported that work is currently happening on a project in Old College re changes to areas including the Raeburn room and the Playfair Library, to address sensitivities and give a more welcoming feel to the diverse groups of students using this public space;
- In response to a question about the University's position as a place of sanctuary for the Israeli and Jewish academic community during the intense conflict in Israel-Gaza, CC said that conversations were moving forward but were likely to take a region-wide approach to this fraught political situation;
- In response to a question about the investment return on the University's endowment of around £500m, CC explained that as this is a permanent endowment, charity Law dictates that the University can only spend the interest earned which is approx. £10m a year - around 1% of the University's turnover;
- The University's Investment Committee manages the positive long-term results and D & A continues to fundraise for the endowment.

Thanking CC for his presentation and for responding frankly to a wide variety of questions, the Convener remarked on the vital role that D & A plays in assisting the success of the University and its synergistic relationship with the GC. CC then left the meeting.

### **3. Minutes of the Meeting of 27 June 2023**

The committee approved the minutes

### **4. Matters arising from the Minutes of 27 June 2023**

There were none.

### **5. Business Committee Work Plan for 2023-24**

- The Convener referred to paper 2, circulated previously for information;
- No invited guest speaker was currently planned for the meetings in December/February/June to allow more time for reports from Standing Conveners and the Court Assessors. This would also leave space to include presentations on other pertinent topics as they arise;
- PM invited any members who had suggestions re the content or format of BC meetings to send them to WD and himself as soon as possible.

### **6. Standing Committees' Work Plans for 2023-24**

- Paper 3, previously circulated, gave information about dates and speakers for meetings in semester one;
- PM drew attention to the facility for co-option to a Standing Committee, which could be used by SC Conveners in order to increase the skill set within their committee membership;
- The BC would need to establish and approve criteria and a process for such co-options should any Convenor wish to take advantage of this facility.

### 7. Protocol for General Council Elections to the Business Committee

- WD explained that Paper 4 had been presented for comment to the Business Committee in June and then reviewed by the Constitutional Standing Committee. This drew into one document various descriptions of how elections to the Business Committee should be run, to provide absolute clarity around the rules for competitive elections and which would be available to be consulted via the GC website;
- An increase in the word limit for the Candidate Statement accompanying the nomination paper from 50 to 100 words was agreed.
- There being no changes suggested to the Protocol, it was approved by the Business Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

### 8. Process and timetable for election of the next Convener and Vice Convener

- The terms of office of the BC Convener and Vice-Convener will end in July 2024;
- PM does not intend to seek re-election as Convener;
- Paper 5 set out the relevant provisions for election arrangements and included a draft timetable (Appendix 2);
- It was noted that the Secretary and Convener will not propose or second candidates, as they are jointly responsible for opening ballot forms and declaring the result;
- Identical rules apply for eligibility to stand for election as Convener or Vice-Convener;
- The BC approved the paper, as shown in Appendix 3.

### 9. Protocol for General Council Involvement with University Strategies

- During the BC meeting in June 2023, the University Provost, Professor Kim Graham, had mentioned a number of strategic exercises which were underway under her oversight, and questions had been raised about the extent to which the GC might be involved in any of them;
- Paper 6, previously circulated, was intended to be a useful reference document about consultation with the BC;
- The Secretary had discussed the content with Rona Smith, Director of Strategic Planning and Insight, before circulating it to the BC.
- The BC was content with the proposed Protocol but before it is sent to the University Secretary, there was final opportunity to provide any drafting comments.

#### **Action: -**

- ***BC members were invited to send any drafting comments to WD by Thursday 26 October;***
- ***The Secretary will send the draft Protocol to the University Secretary for comment, prior to final approval of the document.***

### 10. Observations by General Council Assessors

- Jock Millican gave the report of the Court Assessors from the Court meeting of 9 October 2023, which had taken place in the John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls;

- He reported that the morning seminar had discussed the delivery of the University's strategic priorities in 2023-24, looking particularly at improving communications both internal and external, and the impact of Edinburgh Innovations. The University is among the top 5 in the UK for its performance re commercial revenue coming from student and staff spin-outs and licensing deals.
- The afternoon session had covered the following:
  - Principal's Report
    - Contribution from the UK Government of £900m towards the University's new supercomputer to aid research across UK;
    - Welcome Week – continuing strong demand for places at UoE; University pledge to meet accommodation demands for all new incoming students has been met;
    - Principal had expressed disappointment over union strikes and poor NSS results;
    - Staff Survey – one third response rate; negative views re Senior Leadership Team and large scale change management projects;
    - Horizon – welcomed the announcement last month that after protracted negotiations it was agreed that the UK would become an Associate member;
    - Student Experience – persistently poor overall, with very few positives. Some input from the Executive Team including Colm Harmon, VP Students and Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary, Students, plus 3 Heads of Colleges and staff member on Court – very clear that they were determined to get things working better, particularly on marking and assessments and the timing of that; Sarah Wolffe added that there seemed to be a genuine renewed effort over improving the NSS results
  - EUSA Report
    - Had highlighted priorities for the year, including Widening Participation and the cost of living crisis;
    - Actively working with the University on the Student Survey;
  - Sports Union –
    - “Exceptional” report from President, Peter Sawkins - first time report given in person;
    - Highlighted the record number who had signed up for sports - 8.5k members of 70 different clubs and 900 volunteers;
    - Had had to turn some people away because not enough space/facilities;
    - No planning permission as yet for the proposed sports facilities at Peffermill;
    - Sports Union could help with projects such as Curriculum Transformation and the Student Survey around active health;
  - People and Money – an external review had commenced earlier in the summer;
  - Process and regulations agreed over next year's Rectorial Elections – one change in the regulations was that all the candidates will now need to undertake to abide by the Court Code of Conduct; some clarification also on the roles of Rector and the Senior Lay Person on Court.

### *ACTION*

*The Convener asked WD to thank the Head of Court Services and the University Secretary for allowing BC access to the Court Agenda.*

### **11. Draft Resolutions of the University Court**

None received.

### **12. Ordinance 186 on General Council Membership – Working Party Report**

- WD spoke to Paper 7 which presented the Report from a Working Group examining the feasibility of earlier proposed changes to Ordinance 186 that defines membership of the GC;
- He explained that the previous challenging proposal of allowing all with Honorary appointments to join the General Council would not now be included in the revised Ordinance as this proposal had been based on a misunderstanding of the specific category of Honorary Fellow eligible to join General Council because of multiple uses of the term 'Honorary Fellows' within the University ;
- Measures to create parity of membership for academic and professional staff at grade 8 and above would be introduced;
- Also, eligibility would be extended to include all who graduate with a University qualification and not only those with a degree;
- The BC agreed it was content if these proposals were presented to Court in December, which if approved would then be subject to formal consultation with Senate and the General Council;
- BC would decide at its meeting in December how to consult General Council members;
- No change in the Ordinance can take effect until approval is granted by the Privy Council;
- Paper 7 shows the extended timeline for the approval process.

### **13. Report from the Secretary of the General Council**

- Paper 8 had been circulated previously for information;
- WD gave an update on the meeting with the Lane Agency on 12 October about outsourcing the production of Billet;
- This development was considered a good opportunity to receive professional support around key messaging and encourage better attendance at Half-Yearly Meetings.

### **14. Minutes of the Constitutional Standing Committee – 21 September 2023**

- Paper 9, circulated previously, covered consideration of items for discussion/approval which had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

### **15. Any other competent business**

None.

### **16. Date of next meeting – 7 December 2023**

The next meeting would take place at 5.15pm on Thursday, 7 December 2023, in either the Raeburn Room, Old College or ECCI (to be confirmed).

## Appendix 1

### Topics to raise with Chris Cox

#### 1. Engagement of General Council:

- a) what should be the optimal engagement? 2%, 5%, 10% active engagement per annum?
- b) beyond the statutory requirement, what outputs beyond that engagement are desirable?
- c) how are learning points for success from established methods for mass engagement by other organisations being acted upon? Which other organisations are being used for learning?

#### 2. Philanthropy.

- a) Beyond individual contributions, how can BC members engage in this? Is there a standing request from BC members to act via their own networks and/or participate as ambassadors at events?
- b) What is the target for increasing the university reserves?

#### 3. Donations from alumni. American universities' sports programmes are the 'front porch' of the university and have tremendous power to raise donations from alumni.

- a) what do you see as Edinburgh's 'front porch'?
- b) How do UK institutions engender that same sense of community and 'school spirit' that then encourages lifelong giving

#### 4. Review of Historic and Contemporary Racism. Other universities and organisations have recently published their reports on this.

- a) When will be the Edinburgh University review be made publicly available?
- b) On 27 October 2022, the City of Edinburgh Council publicly acknowledged the city's past role in sustaining slavery and colonialism, and issued an apology to those who suffered. The Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Group included the University of Edinburgh and the publication included 10 recommendations, all of which would obligate a response from the university. What is the current response from the university one year later?

#### 5. Sanctuary. Will the University make a statement about providing sanctuary for Israel and the Jewish community during the invasion of Israel similar to what it has done for the Ukraine?

#### 6. Global Strategy

When International Standing Committee met Dr. Rebecca Jones, it was agreed that the potential for alumni engagement needed to be set within the ongoing review of the University's Global Strategy. **What is the contribution to this strategy review from D&A?** The General Council can offer support and be an important intermediary.

#### 7. Consular Corps. This diplomatic resource on our doorstep was recognised in the pre-pandemic Memorandum of Understanding which provides an opportunity for closer liaison

and co-operation for the benefit of overseas students and staff on campus. How does D& A contribute to the effectiveness of the MOU as a good example of Town and Gown?

## Appendix 2

### Protocol for General Council Elections to the Business Committee

All elections by the General Council membership are governed by the Regulations for General Council Elections.

Consistent with the principles laid out in these Regulations, this Protocol is a description of the process for conducting an election to the Business Committee. It has been prepared by the Constitutional Standing Committee and approved by the Business Committee on [insert date]. This Protocol provides guidance to all who are involved in these elections and is available on the website of the General Council or on request from the General Council Office.

An election is held every year to appoint members to the Business Committee to replace those members who retire by rotation or otherwise at the end of the academic year, which is 1 August to 31 July. Members of the Business Committee must be members of the General Council. The result of the ballot is declared at the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting held in February.

The main stages in the election of members of the Business Committee are:

#### (1) Call for Nominations

The Secretary intimates the election to members of the General Council in the Billet for the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting held in June in the year before the election and calls for members of the General Council to submit nominations.

#### (2) Submission of Nominations for Election

a. All nominations must be proposed and seconded by members of the General Council and Candidates cannot act as their own Proposer or Secunder. A Candidate for election must complete the nomination paper (Schedule E-: Business Committee Members), a copy of which is attached to this Protocol, and must submit this to the Secretary not later than 80 days before the date of the Half- Yearly Meeting in February.

b. Each nomination must be accompanied by a head and shoulders photograph (preferably a digital photograph) of the Candidate taken within the preceding five years.

c. In the event of the Candidate not having signed (with either a wet or a digital signature) the nomination paper, other evidence of the Candidate's consent to the nomination must accompany the nomination paper.

#### (3) Checking of validity of Nominations

a. The Secretary checks that the Candidate and the respective Proposer and Secunder are members of the General Council and that any reference to any office or position connected with the University of Edinburgh contained in the nomination paper is consistent with the University records available to the Secretary. All other academic or professional qualifications, offices or positions

stated in the nomination paper are accepted as submitted, except that if requested to do so by a member of the

General Council prior to the declaration of the result, details of academic or professional qualifications, offices or positions referred to in the nomination form will be checked by the Secretary.

b. If, after checking, any statements are found to be false, the Secretary shall declare the nomination to be invalid.

c. If, prior to the declaration of the result, a member of the General Council challenges the validity of a nomination, the Convener, whom failing the Vice Convener, of the Business Committee, following receipt of such application, shall investigate the matter and may, if circumstances warrant it, declare the nomination invalid.

d. In declaring any nomination to be invalid, the procedures followed shall be in line with those recommended by Civica.

#### (4) Notification of Candidates to General Council

The Secretary publishes details of all valid Candidates, together with the names of their Proposers and Seconders, in the Billet for the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting in February. The statement by the Candidate contained in the nomination form is not published in Billet but is sent by Civica to all members of the General Council on the electoral roll, along with the voting papers and the photograph of the Candidate. The statement by the Candidate and photograph will also be made available on the website of the General Council.

#### (5) Holding an election

a. In all cases where the number of valid Candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, a ballot shall be held and the Secretary shall publish details of the Candidates and their Proposers and Seconders in the Billet for the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting held in February.

b. If the number of candidates nominated is equal to or less than the number of vacancies to be filled, the Secretary shall intimate in the said Billet that a ballot is not necessary.

c. At any time before the date set for the return of voting papers, a Candidate may withdraw, or the Candidate's Proposer or Secunder may withdraw, the nomination. Such withdrawal must be intimated to the Secretary in writing and signed by the Candidate, or by the Candidate's Proposer or Secunder as the case may be. If because of such withdrawal, or in the event of the death of a Candidate during the said voting period, the number of Candidates left is equal to or less than the number of vacancies to be filled, the counting of the votes returned does not proceed.

d. A casual vacancy is deemed to arise on the resignation, death, legal incapacity, or withdrawal of a person previously elected to the Business Committee, or in the event that the number of Candidates is less than the number of vacancies. Casual vacancies are filled by the Business Committee according to the process laid down in the Constitution for filling such vacancies.



**(6) Eligibility to Vote**

All members of the General Council as specified in the Regulations are eligible to vote in elections. Ballot papers are sent by Civica to all on the electoral roll which consists of:

- a. those members who have requested a postal vote before the closing date for registration for a postal vote shown on the General Council website, and
- b. those members whose email addresses are recorded in the General Council Register and have not withdrawn consent to be sent General Council electronic communications at that address.

**(7) Voting**

a. An electronic ballot paper accompanied by details of the Candidates and their statements will be sent by Civica to all members on the electoral roll eligible to vote electronically.

b. A postal voting paper accompanied by details of the Candidates and their statements will be sent by Civica to all members of the General Council on the electoral roll who have opted to receive a postal vote.

c. If any member on the electoral roll fails to receive a ballot paper from Civica or if the voting paper is spoiled or lost, that member may make a declaration to this effect to the Secretary, who, on receipt of such declaration up to 5 days before the closing date for submitting votes, shall instruct Civica to issue a voting paper to the said member.

d. Voting papers (electronic or postal) will be issued by Civica in January. Members will have not less than 3 weeks thereafter to vote, either electronically or by post, with the closing date for receipt of voting papers by Civica being 4 working days before the date of the Half-Yearly meeting in February.

**(8) Voting system**

a. The voting system used by the General Council for elections shall be a Single Transferable Voting procedure as determined between the Business Committee and Civica, except when there is only one vacancy when the Alternative Vote system will be used. All General Council elections shall be overseen by a representative of Civica.

b. Promptly after the closing date for submitting votes, an Election Result Sheet is prepared by Civica detailing each stage in the allocation of votes calculated according to the previously agreed Single Transferable Voting system and setting out of the results. Civica sends this Election Result Sheet to the Returning Officer in time for the results to be announced at the Half-Yearly Meeting in February. .

c. If, on any occasion when an election is to take place, there are circumstances which, in the opinion of the Business Committee, would make the periods for the issue and return of voting papers insufficient to enable a representative vote of the members of Council to be obtained under

the special conditions prevailing at the time, the Business Committee may extend the said voting periods.

**(9) Returning Officer**

- a. The Returning Officer is the Secretary of the General Council.
- b. If the Secretary is incapacitated by illness or otherwise from discharging the duties of Returning Officer, or if the office of Secretary becomes vacant, the Business Committee shall appoint a person to discharge such duties and the person so appointed shall, so far as the purposes of the election are concerned, act as, and be deemed to be, the Returning Officer.

**(10) Intimation of Results**

- a. The results of an election shall be announced at the statutory Half-Yearly Meeting in February by the Returning Officer, who shall declare the Candidate or Candidates duly elected.
- b. After the results of an election have been announced, each Candidate shall be sent an individual communication from the Returning Officer giving the result of the election, including the Election Result Sheet.
- c. The results of an election showing the names in alphabetical order of those elected along with the Election Result Sheet is published on the General Council's website.

**(11) Indicative Dates/Times for Election to Business Committee**

1. Announcement at the Half -Yearly meeting in June in the previous year to the election and in the Summer and Winter issues of Billet.
2. Closing date for Nominations - not less than 80 days before the February Half- Yearly Meeting.
3. The closing date in November for registering for a postal vote will be published no later than October on the General Council website.
4. Election details are published in the Winter issue of Billet.
5. Postal ballot papers will be sent out in January by Civica.
6. Closing date for receipt by Civica of postal ballot papers – 17.00GMT 4 days before the Half-Yearly Meeting in February.
7. Final date for online voting – 17.00GMT 4 days before the February Half-Yearly Meeting.
8. Date for counting of votes – 3 days before the Half-Yearly Meeting in February.
9. Announcement of results - at the Half Yearly Meeting in February, following which Candidates are promptly notified of the results.

10. Public Notice of election results – to appear on General Council website in the week following the Half Yearly Meeting in February.

(12) Notes

1. Secretary is the Secretary to the General Council
2. Business Committee is the Business Committee of the General Council
3. Civica is Civica Election Systems (previously the Electoral Reform Society)

October 2023

SCHEDULE E

**THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH GENERAL COUNCIL  
ELECTION OF BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

NUMBER OF VACANCIES:

**NOMINATION PAPER**

Any false statement about any office or position connected with the University of Edinburgh, or any false statement about a candidate's academic or professional qualifications or any office or position held, shall render this nomination invalid.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CANDIDATE DETAILS</u></p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>FORENAMES (IN FULL):</p> <p>TITLE:</p> <p>HOME ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO:</p> <p>BUSINESS ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO. (IF APPLICABLE):</p> <p>E-MAIL ADDRESS:</p>	<p>(BLOCK CAPITALS)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>PROPOSER DETAILS</u></p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>FORENAMES (IN FULL):</p> <p>TITLE:</p> <p>HOME ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO:</p> <p>BUSINESS ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO. (IF APPLICABLE):</p> <p>E-MAIL ADDRESS:</p> <p>DEGREES AND DATE OF FIRST GRADUATION:</p>	<p>(BLOCK CAPITALS)</p>

<p><u>SECONDER DETAILS</u></p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>FORENAMES (IN FULL):</p> <p>TITLE:</p> <p>HOME ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO:</p>	<p>(BLOCK CAPITALS)</p>
<p>BUSINESS ADDRESS &amp; TEL NO. (IF APPLICABLE):</p> <p>E-MAIL ADDRESS:</p> <p>DEGREES AND DATE OF FIRST GRADUATION:</p>	

Addresses are required for administrative purposes only.

Particulars required about the Candidate by the General Council:

1 Date and place of first graduation:

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2 Degree and date of graduation at the University of Edinburgh if different from above:

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3 Details of membership of the General Council if not by graduation:

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4 Present occupation:

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Please state in not more than 100 words how, through your skills, knowledge or experience, the Candidate could contribute to the work of the Business Committee. This statement will be printed by the Secretary of Council only to the end of the last sentence preceding the 100<sup>th</sup> word if the statement is longer.

I hereby consent to be nominated as a Candidate for membership of the Business Committee and confirm that the above information is correct.

Signature of Candidate \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Proposer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If not a member of the General Council by graduation, give status:

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Signature of Secunder \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If not a member of the General Council by graduation, give status:

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## Appendix 3

### ELECTION OF CONVENER AND VICE-CONVENER OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The current Convener and Vice Convener will both demit office on 31 July 2024. Their successors need to be chosen beforehand by the Business Committee, with the outcome reported to the June 2024 HYM.

#### 1. Process

The process to be adopted for the election of Convener and Vice Convener is set out in some detail in the Constitutional Arrangements – see Appendix 1 to this report.

The Regulations were agreed in 1994, but as far as I am aware, have never been put to practical test as there has only ever been one candidate for each post. We do not know if this will be the case again and hence the Business Committee should review the whole process in case there is a competitive election for either or both posts.

Whereas the choice of who will be the next Convener and Vice Convener lies entirely in the hands of the Business Committee, the process to be used must be consistent with the Constitution. If Business Committee wishes to make any substantive changes to the process, these would need to be approved at the February Half Yearly meeting, with a Motion included in Winter Billet.

In my view the process set out in the Regulations is reasonable, but there are some aspects, outlined below which are either not specified in the Regulations, or where clarification would be helpful. Provided these are within the discretion of the Business Committee, there would be no need to put these forward for approval by the HYM.

#### a. Eligibility to stand for election.

Rule 1 says – ‘The Convener shall be a serving member of the Business Committee or shall have served on the Committee within the past two years’. As written, this would allow any of the 4 Assessors to Court to stand for election. In my view it should be made clear when seeking nominations, that because of the conflict of interest it would create, if any of the Assessors were elected as Convener or Vice Convener he or she would be expected to stand down as an Assessor.

#### b. Candidate Supporters

Rule 1 says – ‘Any person so qualified may be nominated with the nominee's consent by two members of the Business Committee who shall sign the nomination paper,..... and shall return the nomination paper to the Secretary of the Council before the closing date for the receipt of nominations.’

As the Convener and Secretary are responsible for opening the ballot forms and declaring the result, neither should be supporters to any candidate.

#### c. Withdrawal of Candidature

There is no provision in the Rules for withdrawal after being proposed and seconded.

Suggest we should adopt the same approach as stated in the Protocol for elections to the Business Committee, which says – “At any time before the date set for the return of voting papers, a Candidate may withdraw, or the Candidate's Proposer or Seconder, may withdraw the nomination. Such withdrawal must be intimated to the Secretary in writing and signed by the Candidate, or by the Candidate's Proposer or Seconder as the case may be.” [The reference above to ‘in writing’ should include sent by email.]

d. Postal ballot or electronic ballot?

Rule 2 says – ‘The Convener shall be elected by a postal ballot of the Committee’. The procedures say – ‘...ballot papers containing the names of duly nominated candidates ... shall be despatched by recorded delivery post to all members of the Business Committee.’

When these Rules were written, it was not possible to conduct the ballot electronically. It now is and would be preferable. As the Regulations for elections to Business Committee allow electronic voting, it should be within the discretion of Business Committee to use electronic voting for Convener/ Vice Convener election without the need for a Motion to the HYM?

e. What if there is only one candidate either for Convener or Vice Convener or both posts?

The Constitution is silent about the process for approval if there is only one candidate for either role. In such circumstances, if there is only one (different) candidate for each post and this is approved by the BC, each should be considered to be elected unopposed.

## 2. Timetable for election

As no timescale is set out in the Constitution for the election of Convener and Vice Convener, the timetable is at the discretion of the Business Committee.

A draft timetable is given in Appendix 2, modelled on that adopted by the Business Committee in 2020. The sequence then was the Business Committee decided first on the next Convener and then who will be the next Vice Convener.



APPENDIX 1

PART V. THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Appointment of Convener and Vice-Convener

9. The Business Committee shall appoint a Convener and a Vice-Convener from among its number or from among those who have served on the Committee within the past two years. The appointees shall serve for up to four years from the date of their taking up office. On the expiry of their respective four year periods as Convener and Vice-Convener, they shall be eligible for re-election to their respective offices, each for a further four years. At the expiry of this further period of four years, neither shall be eligible for re-election to the office which they have just completed except in the event of prevailing circumstances deemed by a majority of the Business Committee to be exceptional, in which case the period of office of either or both may be extended for such further period as the Business Committee deems fit according to the special circumstances, but not exceeding one year. Part III of The General Council of the University of Edinburgh Regulations for General Council Elections specifies the details of the process whereby the Convener and Vice-Convener are elected.

REGULATIONS FOR ELECTION OF CONVENER AND VICE-CONVENER OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The rules and procedures for the election of the Convener and Vice-Convener of the Business Committee were adopted by the Business Committee meeting on 23 June 1994.

Rules for the Election of the Convener and the Vice-Convener of the Business Committee

1. The Convener shall be a serving member of the Business Committee or shall have served on the Committee within the past two years. Any person so qualified may be nominated with the nominee's consent by two members of the Business Committee who shall sign the nomination paper which shall include a statement about the nominee of not more than one hundred words, and shall return the nomination paper to the Secretary of the Council before the closing date for the receipt of nominations.
2. The Convener shall be elected by a postal ballot of the Committee from those nominated.
3. The Convener shall hold office for a period of four years and shall preside at meetings of the Committee.
4. In circumstances deemed by a majority of the Business Committee to be exceptional, the Convener shall be eligible for reappointment for one additional year at the invitation of the Committee.

5. The appointment of the Convener shall take effect not later than 1 August in the year of the election.
6. When for any reason the Convener ceases to serve on the Committee before the Convener's term of office ends, the vacancy so arising shall be filled by a member appointed in accordance with the provisions of Rules 1. to 4. Such member shall take office immediately upon election and the term of office shall extend for a period of four years from 1 August coincident with or next following the date of the Convener's election.
7. The same rules shall be followed for the election of the Vice-Convener.

Procedure for the Election of the Convener and the Vice-Convener of the Business Committee

The additional procedures to be observed are as follows:

- (i) As soon as possible after the closing date for receipt of nominations, ballot papers containing the names of duly nominated candidates, the names of their proposers and seconders and the statements about the candidates shall be despatched by recorded delivery post to all members of the Business Committee. A statement about a candidate will be printed only to the end of the last sentence preceding the one hundred and first word if the statement is longer.
- (ii) Enclosed with the ballot paper shall be an envelope addressed to the Secretary of the Council, stamped and marked with the letter 'B'.
- (iii) Envelopes containing ballot papers received from members of the Committee shall be kept unopened by the Secretary of the Council, who shall be responsible for the safe-keeping of all ballot papers.
- (iv) A period of four weeks shall elapse after despatch of ballot papers to allow a reasonable time for them to reach members of the Committee who may be away from home.
- (v) A returning Committee consisting of the Convener and Secretary of the Council shall meet at a time to be arranged for the purpose of opening the envelopes containing the ballot papers and counting the votes. In the event of either of these Office-bearers being a candidate, such Office-bearer shall be ineligible to serve on the returning Committee, and the Business Committee shall appoint instead one of its members who is not a candidate for either office.
- (vi) In the event of there being only two candidates, the candidate obtaining the greater number of votes shall be elected. In the event of a tie, the returning Committee shall determine by lot which candidate shall be selected. In the event of there being more than two candidates, members of the Committee shall indicate their order of preference of all or any number of these candidates on the ballot papers and if one candidate does not obtain an overall majority the election shall be decided by use of the single transferable voting system. The majority of

votes required for election under this system shall be determined relative to the number of valid ballot papers received.

- (vii) The result of the election shall be announced at the Business Committee meeting immediately following the counting of the votes.

#### Single Transferable Vote

More than two nominations make it necessary to use the single transferable vote procedure as follows:

If no candidate has obtained a clear majority of first preference votes the candidate with the lowest number of such votes is eliminated.

The second preferences of the eliminated candidate's supporters are then examined and these votes are transferred to the remaining candidates as first preference votes.

This transference should ensure a clear majority for one of the remaining candidates, but if necessary it can be repeated after elimination of the candidate who at this stage has the lowest number of first preference votes.

If, when a candidate has to be eliminated, two or more candidates are each credited with the same number of votes and are lowest, regard shall be had to the total number of votes credited to each of those candidates at the latest count at which they had unequal values, and the candidate with the smallest value at that count shall be excluded. If two or more candidates are lowest and are each credited with the same value at all counts, the returning Committee shall arrange the papers of such candidates according to the next available preferences recorded thereon for continuing candidates, including the candidates in question, and shall exclude that lowest candidate for whom the total value of the next available preferences expressed is smallest, and if the total values of the next available preference recorded for two or more of the candidates in question are then equal and smallest, the returning Committee shall determine by lot as between the candidates last mentioned which candidate shall be excluded."

APPENDIX 2

ELECTION OF CONVENER AND VICE-CONVENER OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

DRAFT TIMETABLE

2023

21 September – draft report to Conveners Group

12 October - report to Business Committee to decide on process/timetable

22 November – deadline for Motion in Billet (if necessary)

2024

17 February – HYM to consider any Motion (if submitted)

- announcement of those newly elected or re-elected to BC

29 February - Business Committee to confirm arrangements for elections

1 March – Notify Business Committee members who served in 2021/22 and 2022/23 of their eligibility to stand for election as Convener or Vice Convener - nomination forms available for Convener

22 March – closing date for Secretary receiving nominations for Convener

1 April – ballot form for Convener issued

29 April – closing date for voting for Convener

2 May – Business Committee told result of ballot for Convener

3 May - nomination forms available for Vice Convener

17 May – closing date for Secretary receiving nominations for Vice Convener

7 June – closing date for voting for Vice Convener

10 June – Business Committee told of ballot result for Vice Convener

15 June – HYM: announcement of next Convener and Vice Convener



**Minutes of the Academic Standing Committee Meeting held at 4.30pm on Wednesday 1 November 2023 in the Cheviot Room, Charles Stewart House**

**Present:** Stephen Hillier, Convener of ASC  
Joyce Caplan  
Graeme Reid  
Brian Smith  
William Duncan, Secretary of the General Council  
Philip Mawer, Convener of Business Committee  
Gordon Cairns, Vice Convener

**In attendance:** Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary, Students  
Manya Buchan (FSSC) – online  
Ann Cormack (ISC) - online  
Jenny Shaw (Development & Alumni) - online  
Alison MacLeary, Assistant Secretary of the General Council

**1. Welcome and apologies**

The Convener welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the session and led the introductions. He thanked Lucy Evans (LE) for agreeing to speak to the committee about the Student Experience, which remains a priority for ASC, and the other areas of responsibility included within the remit of her role as Deputy Secretary, Students.

Apologies received from Alice Brown.

**2. Presentation by Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary, Students**

Slides used during the presentation will be shared with the committee.

- LE has been in post around a year and has a background in various leadership and administrative roles in a number of universities;
- She is passionate about Higher Education and the role of universities in transforming the lives of students;
- Elements that encompass her current role:

1. The Student Experience overall

- Acknowledged a University commitment to an excellent student experience;
- Believes more work is needed to improve how satisfied students are with their experience;
- A shift to a more caring and supportive approach which acknowledges the importance of the period from pre-arrival to post-graduation and which responds to the needs of students such as fostering a sense of belonging and feeling connected, participation in clubs and societies, accessing services including counselling and support with e.g., living costs and academic concerns.

2. Student Experience Services

Remit covers most university wide student facing structures, working alongside those that sit in other areas especially College and Schools:

**Academic Registry**

- Fees and funding, including scholarships and financial support
- Student records and data
- Insights and surveys
- Visa and international student support
- Graduations
- Student systems
- Exams
- Timetabling
- Academic Services – Senate, Regs and Policies, quality assurance and enhancement, student case work

### **Wellbeing**

- Disability and Learning Support
- Student Wellbeing Service
- Chaplaincy
- Counselling
- Equally Safe

### **Careers and Employability**

- Employer engagement
- Careers consultant
- Internship and Work Experience
- Students as Change Agents
- Making transitions personal – student transitions and development

### **Institute for Academic Development**

- Learning and Teaching Development
- Research Development
- Future Leaders Fellows Development

### 3. Deputy University Secretary

- An important third element of the role;
- Includes work such as University Compliance Group, media work, industrial action, incident response management and USG EDI Committee;
- The role is one that takes on responsibilities for the Secretary to ensure the delivery of a strong governance and service to the University.

### **Strategic imperative**

- The University is 4<sup>th</sup> in the UK for research excellence and a commitment to match this excellence in student experience;
- Poor responses to surveys such as the National Student Survey (NSS) despite a number of initiatives and commitments to improve;
- Issues include students feeling a lack of identity and community, difficulty navigating university services, depersonalised communications and inconsistent interactions with staff;
- Improvement will need support from across the University also looking at how students engage through the entire student journey;
- Create services to prioritise and support students and enable simple and straightforward interaction with the users based on their needs;

- Focus needs to be on our strategic and operational prioritisation of student experience;
- Continue focus on major initiatives: Student Support, Curriculum Transformation, Assessment & Feedback (A & F);
- Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP)
  - Work around refining how degree programmes are delivered;
  - Preserves the integrity of the disciplinary offer, but provides certainty to students on what taking a degree in a particular discipline involves, or in a combination of disciplines, clarifies which requirements are in place, and consequently the choices outside of the discipline that are possible. This addresses a core challenge said by students around the complexity of the offer, and the difficulty in navigating the University, in addition to ensuring that expectations around freedom of choice are understood more coherently;
  - Proposals for undergraduate degrees, addressing directly the feedback received from students regarding their desire to see the strengths of the University and the impact of the University in solving major challenges being reflected in their degree programmes. Challenge courses and experiential learning ensures that students can apply their disciplinary training in an applied context. Both innovations, and others proposed in CTP, react to students encouraging and expecting the University to have more direct engagement with their future outcomes, and effectively helping to allow them to begin to shape their own perspectives on their futures;
  - CTP planning has more closely aligned with other structural reforms current and planned – timetabling models, teaching room design, future learning spaces.
- A&F
  - Based on ongoing feedback from students, a deep commitment to reform of the culture, practices and approaches to assessment and feedback. This will be a key focus of work in this area;
  - Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities were approved last year and enabled each School to review their assessment and feedback practice against the principles and identify areas for improvement;
  - Need to work more closely with students at a local level, including EUSA and course reps, to have conversations about, develop or co-create marking criteria that they understand;
- Work is needed to ensure consistent application and monitoring of expectations of students;
- Also need to resolve ‘pain points’ through process of continuous improvements;
- In response to many of the concerns raised by students, as well as the above strategic programmes, undertaking work to ensure ‘getting the basics’ right;
- Many students do not feel cared for or helped to navigate the complexity of university life;
- Need to improve their experience, so they have a seamless, joined-up and connected journey;
- Need to be realistic and achieve small incremental improvements that show the University is listening and will improve;
- Student Life Cycle Management Group meets monthly to assess the progress of work in each area where there is a dedicated task group;
- **A new model of student support** is a genuinely sector-leading approach to respond to the needs of students;
- The previous model, based on a personal tutor as the students’ key contact, did not have the level of consistency necessary to support the diversity of student needs - in levels of care, expertise, content, and time commitment. Academic guidance and advice is critical – and will always be part of the university’s core offering - but when it goes beyond this it faces



challenges, especially with student needs and expectations spanning beyond academic support;

- The overall aim is to benefit students – to ensure that they have access to consistent levels of timely, professional, empathetic support covering both academic and pastoral matters from within their School, providing support in a more cohort or community-focused environment for students when and where they need it;
- A new way of doing things and an example of a change project that has been well supported and successful in approach so far;
- The new model has a team of people to support with different aspects of student life;
- Student Advisers dedicated to each School, working to the School but cross-institution as a team of support. These staff proactively engage with students, especially during key transitions, and provide day-to-day advice to all students in each School;
- Wellbeing Advisers are specialist mental health and wellbeing support in each School as part of the central Student wellbeing teams. These staff will provide a layer of support between the student advisers and the specialist counselling and disability services to provide proactive and reactive wellbeing support for students;
- Having strong academic leadership via “cohort leads”, with specific responsibility for providing advice and guidance on programme matters and building a sense of belonging among members of the programme cohort;
- Strengthening the current Peer Assisted Learning Schemes to enhance and promote peer support available;
- Continued recognition of the role teaching team’s play in supporting students to transition into and through their studies both within and alongside the curriculum;
- Implementation of the model was undertaken through a phased approach commencing in September 2022;
- Full implementation of the model, across all Schools and taught students, has now taken place from September 2023. At the first Project Board of this academic year, College and student representatives reported a successful start to Welcome Week, with students having met their Cohort Leads and Student Advisers, who are working hard to build a sense of belonging and community across all student groups;
- The implementation has been a partnership approach with a central project team supporting College implementation groups, overseen by the Project Board, critically including student representation from Edinburgh University Students’ Association (EUSA).
- *Monitoring and evaluation*
  - Throughout phase 1, undertook assessment and monitoring through surveys and focus groups with students and staff in order to evaluate the impact of the new model, and make improvements, as required, to the model for phase 2, which mostly focused on enhanced training and support for staff in specific roles;
  - Many students have provided positive feedback about the support they receive, finding Student Advisers and academic colleagues helpful and timely in their responses;
  - Work continues to improve the consistency of support across Schools through training and Communities of Practice as the model develops;
  - Confident that as the model embeds further, will see positive impact in student satisfaction across many areas, especially academic support, organisation and management, student voice and mental health communications in forthcoming surveys;
- Student Wellbeing Service is part of the model and works with all students (including PGR);
- **Drivers for the service**

- Sometimes challenging for staff in schools to manage 'students of concern', How best to deal with urgent/ crisis situations How to respond when a student is partially engaged/not engaged with University life? Cultural factors (stigma, shame, guilt), not understanding what support is available and how to access
- **What the service does**
  - Triage between SA and specialist services
  - Assess and stabilise (where possible) student situation
  - Risk assessment & management: make sure students are safe
  - Pro-active outreach and engagement
  - Prevention/ early intervention
- **Reasons for referral**
  - Depression/ low mood/ anxiety
  - Academic performance
  - Personal relationships
  - Suicidal ideation/ behaviour
  - Social isolation
  - Non-engagement
  - 1,821 students last year
  - Response time is 1 working day for urgent/ high risk situations- this has been met 100%
  - At referral, (a) 47% 'moderate to high risk'; (b) 32% 'low' or 'low to moderate risk'. At case closure, this is (a) 17%; (b) 48%
- **Learning and development**
  - Communication, engagement, relationships and partnership work with Schools is crucial
  - Pro-active programme (drop-ins, wellbeing seminars and workshops) well received
  - Continued focus on induction and training
  - Clear pathways and threshold into the service
- Working closely with Recruitment & Admissions as part of the entire student journey;
- Strategy 2030 also sets out important broader context to:
  - Widen participation so that students from any background can come to study at the University of Edinburgh. Offer accessible, responsive and efficient educational services as well as personal, pastoral and professional support;
  - Encourage a culture of lifelong learning and attachment to the University community;
  - Not grow for growth's sake. Improve the student experience while aiming to keep the undergraduate community at stable size;
  - In reshaping teaching for the future, expect to expand interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, postgraduate and digital education;
- *Edinburgh is an extremely popular University in terms of competition for student places and yet again it has scored highly in the THE World Rankings (no. 30). Are students aware of Edinburgh's international profile? If/how does it impact the student experience?*
- The data outlined on slide 9 was prepared by the Head of Market Insight and comes from the 2023 decliners survey.

### Discussion

- The University's strategic objective is to build on the idea of One University Community;
- Recognise that more support is needed for international students who have particular needs;
- The cost of living/housing crisis is a real concern, particularly for many UK domiciled students who have no financial support;

- Working with Director of Place to extend the University's guarantee of accommodation for more than just the first year, and looking at the affordability of student accommodation;
- It was noted that, while concerns such as housing, transport and living costs are mostly outside the University's sphere of influence, issues such as marking and assessment could be addressed because an important part of the teaching role is to provide feedback in a timely way;
- Developing networks with other institutions is critical in sharing best practise;
- LE acknowledged a supportive and helpful relationship with the General Council Business Committee;
- CPT is expected be initially rolled out in 2025;
- Code of Student Conduct is important within the framework of a broader Dignity and Respect Policy;
- Better opportunities for staff and students to engage in the process;
- Student Advisers are trained in the responsibilities of their role;
- Female students are marginally more satisfied than male students based on national student survey data.

The Convener thanked LE for talking to the committee about the strategy to tackle the significant challenges within this area. LE left the meeting at this point.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2023**

The minutes were approved.

**4. Matters arising from the meeting held on 1 June 2023**

There were no matters arising.

**5. Priorities for 2023-24 Session**

- The meeting on 23 November will be with EUSA President, Sharan Atwal
- Proposals for further meetings in Semester Two:
- Invite Professor Sian Bayne, Assistant Principal for Digital Education to speak to ASC about the developing impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on learning, teaching and assessment;
- Professor Colm Harmon, VP Students, to give an update on CTP.
- SH invited members of ASC to feedback with any other suggestions.

**6. Draft Resolutions**

No. 112/2023: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Selective Breeding

No. 113/2023: Alteration of the title of Chair of Chemical Biology

No. 114/2023: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Human Geography and Ethnography

The above Draft Resolutions were approved by the Committee.

**Action: -**

***AM will forward to the Business Committee for further consideration before the Court meeting of 4 December.***

**7. Any other Business**

None.

**8. Date of the next meeting**

Thursday 23 November, 4.30pm in the Cheviot Room, Charles Stewart House.

**Minutes of the Academic Standing Committee Meeting held at 4.30pm on Thursday 23 November 2023 in the Cheviot Room, Charles Stewart House**

**Present:** Stephen Hillier, Convener of ASC  
Alice Brown  
Joyce Caplan  
Graeme Reid  
Brian Smith  
William Duncan, Secretary of the General Council  
Philip Mawer, Convener of Business Committee  
Gordon Cairns, Vice Convener of the Business Committee

**In attendance:** Sharan Atwal, EUSA President  
Lauren Byrne, EUSA VP Welfare  
Manya Buchan (FSSC) – online

**1. Welcome and apologies**

The Convener (SH) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced representatives from the Students' Association, Sharan Atwal (SA) and Lauren Byrne (LB) to speak to the committee about key issues affecting the student body.

Apologies received from Alison MacLeary.

**2. Presentation by Sharan Atwal, EUSA President and Lauren Byrne, EUSA VP Welfare**

- SA and LB gave an oral account of priorities for the Student's Association and took questions throughout the meeting;
- Tackling the lack of recreational spaces for students (especially as Teviot is currently closed) with an emphasis on refurbishment of the KB campus and ensuring suitable sports and exercise facilities are available;
- Cost of living and housing
  - VP Community working with Accommodation, Catering and Events (ACE) to ensure students are aware of any accommodation vacancies and other support offered by the University;
  - Increasing amount of returning students who need accommodation which is not met under the 1st year guarantee;
  - University needs to focus on increased availability and affordability of beds but often faces objections from the local community over plans to create more student housing;
  - A co-ordinated and collaborative approach with the Council is needed to deal with challenging issues such as student homelessness;
  - Housing insecurity has a huge detrimental impact on the student experience;
- Concerns over student safety on campus
  - Described a recent political protest which had escalated out of control and suggested that this type of situation could be better managed by the University's own security team rather than police intervention;
  - Signposting students to resources which can offer support and pastoral care after increased reports of anti-Semitism and homophobia on campus;

- SH thanked the EUSA reps for raising this important issue and proposed future discussion on how the University manages its security operations;
- WD reminded the committee that Bristo Square is a public area and this might account for a police presence;
- Marking and Assessment
- Reported that all students now have their degree results;
- University looking at ways to mitigate future reputational damage and the negative impact on students;
- Challenges in addressing uniformly the issue of assessment and feedback which varies across Schools and Colleges;
- Curriculum Transformation offers the possibility for a critical review of the existing assessment structure i.e. the reasons for each assessment and realistic timeline for marking and feedback, taking into account the workload volume required for different courses;
- Reported increasing tensions over poor relationship between the University's Senior Leadership Team and staff and students as depicted in recent staff survey and NSS scores;
- The Secretary reminded the student representatives that there is an opportunity to raise concerns and put questions to the Principal at the GC February HYM.

SH thanked SA and LB for their contributions and giving their valuable time to the committee.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2023**

The minutes were approved.

### **4. Matters arising from the meeting held on 1 November 2023**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. Draft Resolutions**

- No new Resolutions were received;
- The committee discussed the increasing number of new Personal Chair appointments.

### **6. Any other Business**

The Secretary invited ASC to attend the next FSSC meeting with the Director of HR as an opportunity to review more closely the issue of staff satisfaction. This will be in addition to the usual quota of ASC meetings for the session.

### **7. Preparations and date of the next meeting**

Tbc.

**Minutes of the Constitutional Standing Committee Meeting held at 4.30pm  
Thursday 9 November 2023 in the Cheviot Room, Charles Stewart House**

**Present:** Gordon Cairns, Convener of CSC  
Candice Donnelly, PASC – (online)  
Steve Hillier, ASC – (online)  
Krystyna Szumelukowa, ISC  
William Duncan, Secretary of the General Council  
Philip Mawer, Convener of the Business Committee

**In attendance:** Alison MacLeary, Assistant Secretary of the General Council

**1. Minutes of the Meeting on 21 September 2023**

The committee approved the minutes.

**2. Matters arising from the Meeting on 21 September 2023**

There were no matters arising that would not be covered under agenda item 3.

**3. Court Paper re changes to Ordinance 186 - Membership**

- The Committee referred to a first draft of the report about the proposed changes to Ordinance 186 on General Council (GC) membership;
- The final version will go to the University Court on 4 December, subject to approval by the University Secretary;
- This draft report was partly modelled on an earlier version produced for submission to Court in April 2022, but which was withheld by former University Secretary, Sarah Smith;
- The draft also included material from the recent Working Party Report on the feasibility of implementation which was presented to the Business Committee on 12 October, incorporating further minor edits from Jenny Shaw (D&A) on paras 14 (Data Protection ) and para 15 (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion);
- The Committee approved the amended text illustrating the proposed changes, principally to extend membership to *all* University staff at grade 8 or above, and which were highlighted in red in Appendix II, but noted the addition of a new clause - 1(f):

**(f) former staff (admitted previously as per Clause (d) above) who accept the invitation to retain their membership of the General Council after being employed by the University for a period of at least three years in a role assigned to Grade 8 or above or equivalent and who leave University employment except when dismissed or for other adverse reasons as determined by the General Council.**

- The Secretary explained that University HR records classify staff who leave according to 35 categories and that, while for most of these categories it is reasonable to offer those who leave after 3 years the option of continued membership of the GC, there a few categories where he suggested that staff should not automatically receive such a letter and these are:
  - Dismissal, or

- Abandonment of contract, or
- the euphemistic term, 'Mutually Agreed Termination'
- These are the reasons termed 'adverse', but the wording should not restrict the revised Ordinance to using these specific categories in case HR should introduce others where an offer might be withheld;
- Although it may only be a small number of cases where the GC might not want to offer the option of continuing membership, if there is an ongoing dispute (or risk of that), it would be favourable if the GC has the authority through the Terms of the Ordinance to withhold the offer, until satisfied that it would be appropriate to issue it;
- It was agreed that there is a responsibility to the reputation of the University and the GC and it would be useful for the GC to have the discretion to withhold membership in certain circumstances, but need to be clear about the criteria for compliance of the new Ordinance, which should be simple and easily understood, and the operational processes for applying the new guidelines should be equally straightforward i.e. the spreadsheet received from HR of those leaving the University should automatically filter out those not considered appropriate for continuing membership before being received by D & A and the GC office;
- Suggested amended the wording of clause 1(f) to read:  
*"...for other adverse reasons in **those categories of case** determined by the General Council."*
- Clause 5 of the Ordinance gives the option for appeal to the University Court in individual instances of exception to continued membership.

***Action:-The Secretary will seek further clarification of the wording in clause 1(f) in consultation with the Conveners in CSC who have legal expertise, and the University Secretary who is Head of Legal Services and also Registrar of the GC.***

#### **4. Any other business**

##### Business Committee Meeting – 7 December

- Confirmed that this meeting will now take place in the ECCI, Infirmary Street. It was agreed that the Raeburn room will be used for future BC meetings in February and May 2024 with the final meeting in 23/24 due to be held in the ECCI.

***Action:-SC Conveners were asked to prepare a brief summary of the key issues arising from both SC meetings held in Semester One, which will be circulated along with the BC papers as a focus for discussion and feedback from BC members at the meeting.***

##### Speakers for future SC meetings

- KS proposed the following for ISC meetings in Semester 2:
  - A presentation focused on India;
  - Engagement with designated alumni hubs who could join the meeting online.



### Billet

- The Conveners were informed about progress relating to a fresh new design concept for Winter Billet, the purpose being to increase engagement with wider GC membership.

### Draft Resolutions

The current process of approval by ASC/BC of Draft Resolutions received from Court was queried;

It was suggested that, in cases where the Convener of the Academic Standing Committee and the Convener and the Vice Convener of the Business Committee have no concerns about the proposed list of new Chairs, then they should have the delegated authority to be able to instruct the Secretary to inform Court that the Business Committee is content, and for this to be reported by the Secretary to the next Business Committee meeting. If, however, any of these Office Bearers has concerns about the proposed Chairs, then the aspect giving concern should be referred to the whole Business Committee for its decision.

***Action: CSC will explore whether the current process of approval by the BC of Draft Resolutions received from Court is part of the formal Constitutional Arrangements.***

**Minutes of the Finance and Services Standing Committee  
4.30pm on Tuesday 21 November 2023  
Ochil Room, Charles Stewart House**

**Present:** Almira Delibegovic-Broome, Convener, FSSC (online)  
Manya Buchan (online)  
Frances Dow  
Kirsty MacGregor  
Bruce Nelson  
William Duncan, Secretary of the General Council  
Philip Mawer, Convener of the Business Committee  
Gordon Cairns, Vice Convener of the Business Committee

**In attendance:** Gary Jebb, Director of Place

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Sir Philip Mawer chaired the meeting on behalf of the Convener, Almira Delibegovic-Broome KC, who was overseas at the time of the meeting and joined online. He welcomed the committee to the first meeting of the session, including new member Manya Buchan, and introduced Gary Jebb to provide an update on matters affecting the University's Estate.

This was a closed meeting and only FSSC members, Business Committee Office Bearers and secretariat were present.

**2. Presentation by Gary Jebb, Director of Place**

Mr Jebb focused his presentation on the issue of student accommodation but also addressed questions concerning Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and how it is affecting University buildings, and how new buildings and renovation plans are being affected by inflationary costs.

**Student Accommodation**

- Recognition that housing is a major challenge in the City and the City Council has declared a housing emergency (around 5000 people living in temporary accommodation) the housing crisis has resulted in significant challenges for the student body;
- The four universities in Edinburgh and Edinburgh College are working together to develop an integrated student housing strategy for the City which should be completed in early 2024;
- Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) needs to be part of the solution for student accommodation in the City;
- The University guarantees accommodation for all first year undergraduate students from outside Edinburgh and 1st year postgraduate students – 8500 beds are needed to meet this guarantee;
- Committed to offering some returning students bed spaces (for the last 2 years approx. 2000);

- 10,500 beds owned or contracted by the University, which is the biggest portfolio in the sector;
- 100 University beds across all rent bands are currently unallocated;
- 32 students on waiting list but these offers have been declined due to the area or price band not being right type, which indicates that location and the nature of accommodation seems to be more important to students than the price point;
- In Semester one (2022) all 10,500 were occupied but around 100 vacancies in Semester 2;
- Aligning supply of beds with demand; reasonably confident that the University will be able to meet its guarantee over the next 5 years and in addition able to accommodate visiting (temporary) students;
- University business model is considering carefully the size and shape of its Estate through long term planning;
- Considerable pressures on returning students as changes in the rental market has meant that there are approximately 2000 fewer flats available to students – potentially a reduction in capacity of around 4000-5000 beds and so many in their second year and above are looking to PBSA;
- At the start of term the University put in place emergency arrangements for any student experiencing homelessness;
- Cost and affordability are big issues – University rent is around £150-200 per week and has increased by around 6% which does not cover all energy costs; this is considerably less expensive than the private student rental market;
- Some concern over the number of Studio developments which do not encourage communities or positive mental health and wellbeing;
- University provides enhanced wraparound care within its residential accommodation;
- University accommodation portfolio continues to need investment but increased construction costs and current planning framework create challenges;
- Relatively small amount of family accommodation available;
- University student accommodation is now found across the city and not solely based in the Southside area as before;
- After publication of the Grenfell Report the University has already made a number of significant changes by installing improved measures such as high-end smoke detection and fire escapes.

## Discussion

- Estimate that by 2033 the University will need 3000 extra beds, which should comfortably accommodate the “guarantee” for new student arrivals but does not take account of the emerging problem of accommodating students in later years;
- Offering accommodation to students in towns in the Lothians that have well connected bus services to Edinburgh did not seem to be popular with new students who prefer living centrally;
- Student accommodation is viewed by the University leadership as a priority and part of the core student experience;
- **Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)**
  - This lightweight concrete is used largely in the construction of roofing panels which can deteriorate over time;

- The University has monitored the condition of these panels since 2018;
- When issues were identified on the King’s Buildings Campus, short term remedial action was taken and some of the affected areas at KB are now operational; the remedial work required at the Appleton Tower is more complex and will take considerably longer to deal with and means two of the main lecture theatres will not be usable until next academic year; Some of the work required at KB is similarly large scale and by its nature longer term
- The following link shows current restricted buildings:  
[RAAC at the University of Edinburgh | The University of Edinburgh](#)
- Dealing with RAAC has had significant impact on teaching and research, and resulted in unanticipated financial costs.

The Convener thanked GJ for an informative and candid presentation.

### **3. Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Alison Macleary.

### **4. Minutes from the meeting held on 12 June 2023**

Members approved the minute from the meeting.

### **5. Matters arising from the minutes of 12 June 2023**

None.

### **6. FSSC’s work plan 2023-24**

- Director of HR– results of the staff survey (January 2024)
- Director of Finance– to review university’s annual published set of report and accounts to 31 July 2023 (February 2024)
- VP and Chief Information Officer - prepare for HYM on AI (April/May 2024)

***Action:- It was agreed the meeting with the Director of HR about staff satisfaction and morale would be open to members of ASC and WD will mention this at the ASC meeting to be held on 23 November .***

### **7. General Council income and expenditure for 2022-23, and Budget for 2023-24**

- Papers 2 and 3 circulated previously gave a detailed statement of General Council operational income and expenditure for the year July 2023 based on the internal records maintained by GC office; there was a significant underspend which was returned to the University;
- General Council Prince Philip Fund expenditure shown in the People and Money system was £5500 and net investment income was £4637; the value of the Fund had declined from £182K to £172K because the investments had not performed well and there was an unrealized capital loss of £9K; concern was expressed that the expenditure attributed to the Fund was £1000 higher than expected due to a miscoding error and central finance had ruled it was not possible to correct the error;
- Banton/Legacy Fund – information on the Fund had been sought, but was unable to be provided by central finance due to staff holidays;
- Operational Budget for 2023/24 remains the same as in previous years at £64k;

- A preliminary allocation is:
  - £44k for communications [The cost of producing Billet will be considerably higher given the decision by CAM to outsource this]
  - £10k Summer HYM at Edinburgh Futures Institute
  - £10k contingency fund
- The Secretary will provide FSSC with a more refined budget at the meeting in January;
- Concerns were expressed re continuing difficulties with the P & M system.

**8. Any other business**

None.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

Tbc

**Minutes of the International Standing Committee held at 4.30pm**  
**Thursday 26 October 2023**  
**Cheviot Room, Charles Stewart House**

**Present:** Krystyna Szumelukowa, Convener of ISC  
Ann Cormack  
Mary Gunn (online)  
Francis McManus  
William Duncan, Secretary of the General Council  
Philip Mawer, Convener of the Business Committee  
Gordon Cairns, Vice-Convener of the Business Committee

**In attendance:** Alison MacLeary, Assistant Secretary of the General Council

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Krystyna Szumelukowa (KS) welcomed new members of ISC, Ann Cormack (AC), Mary Gunn (MG) and Francis McManus (FM), to the first meeting of this academic year; the main purpose of which was an introduction to the work of the committee and how the various strategies of the University fit together and inform ISC's agenda with a focus on themes for the coming session.

KS explained that the University's Strategy 2030 is the current framework which guides the Global Engagement Plan (the review remains in progress) and runs alongside other major University reviews such as the Curriculum Transformation project which is addressing new paradigms of transnational education and research.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies received from John Clifford.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023**

The minute had been previously circulated and was approved.

**4. Matters arising from the minutes of 25 May 2023**

Item 2: KS had sent Rebecca Jones a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding.

**5. Meeting to discuss Work Plan for ISC 2023-24**

- A note KS had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. This included agenda items previously covered by ISC such as the international student experience; the Confucius Institute and Chinese student numbers; the University's international partnerships; staff and student welfare abroad; the legacy of slavery and colonialism; current engagement within USA, Canada and Africa; and the consequences of Brexit and Ukraine for Europe. Copies had also been sent to James Smith, VP International and Chris Cox, VP Philanthropy and Advancement and Executive Director of Development and Alumni Services (D&A) for their information.
- The committee will continue to monitor these areas in 2023-24 with consideration also to the following topics:
  - Reflecting on how the GC can relate to and connect with the many and varied alumni clubs and associations across the globe
  - The University's partnerships in SE Asia and India which Peter Mathieson, the Principal, has identified since 2021 as the major opportunity for the University to strengthen its global reach and widen diversity

- The value-added potential of the Edinburgh Consular Corps to support and advise the University on its global presence and assist in providing support for international students and staff.

### **Noted the following points during the discussion:**

- The positive role the GC can have as ambassadors to the University when attending events organised by D & A as part of their schedule of activities;
- MG will attend the University's fundraising event in Washington on 7 November;
- AC would like to be more actively involved in university events taking place in the London area;
- KS mentioned that representatives from alumni clubs in London and Brussels have attended past GC meetings and events in Edinburgh;
- William Duncan (WD) pointed out that as there has been a reduction in the amount of overseas travel and much of the University's business activity is now conducted online, travel restrictions may also have implications for supporting alumni activities;
- Noted variation in the organisation and aims of different international alumni clubs and associations;
- MG described her experience during the five years she had been involved as President of Alumni SE Asia group, highlighting that no funding had been received for events and because of GDPR restrictions, no access was given to any of the alumni contacts; the only means of reaching out and advertising events was via the alumni office who would disseminate the link to a facebook page to their own list of contacts which was not shared;
- WD added that data protection restrictions mean that the General Council (GC) can only currently communicate with around half of its membership;
- Philip Mawer (PM) noted that the University's activity with alumni clubs is not really affiliated with the work of the GC and this was a potential weakness;
- Raised the issue of how the GC could work synergistically with D&A in relating to international alumni, and liaise with and support the various groups and networks;
- GC has an important role in representing the voice of graduates and might develop an enhanced presence on online platforms such as LinkedIn and Platform One;
- The GC Business Committee should be recognised as one of the University's formal alumni hubs;
- The Public Affairs Standing Committee has discussed possible ways to generate social media content containing exciting news from within the University, which could be sent out as part of GC comms to engage with international members who are viewed as an integral part of the University community and keep them up to date with alumni activities;
- Communication is a 2-way process and there needs to be a facility for feedback;
- Critical to be able to receive the views of alumni and learn about how the University is perceived internationally as increasing numbers of graduates are based overseas;
- Continued dialogue with D & A regarding how flows of communication to alumni are managed, resourced and analysed to simplify and give clarity to messaging in order to achieve the desired objectives:
- D & A have a primarily philanthropic role and the GC is part of the University's governance structure.
- Invite VP International, Professor James Smith, to present on the opportunities and challenges for the University to include India and the rest of Asia;
- Proposed exploring this issue more closely by having a further meeting in semester 2 with the International Deans and/or Regional Directors for South Asia;

- MG had recently visited Gujarat University in India - one of the University's transnational partnerships - and reported on her experience;
- KS had approached Rebecca Jones, Director of Alumni Relations, about the benefits of working more closely with the Consular Corps in Edinburgh who represent a variety of countries in different ways, and about how their experience and contacts can bring added value.

KS ended the meeting by inviting the committee to feed back any comments or ideas arising from the discussion and any questions for James Smith for the next ISC meeting on 16 November.

**Action: -**

- *WD will speak to Chris Cox to ask if AC can be added to the invitation list for events taking place in London;*
- *MG and AC offered to identify specific international alumni hubs with which to establish a relationship and develop further connections*

**6. Any other competent business**

None.

**7. Date of next meeting**

Thursday 16 November at 4.30pm in the Ochil Room, Charles Stewart House.



**Minutes of the International Standing Committee held at 4pm  
Thursday 16 November 2023  
Ochil Room, Charles Stewart House**

**Present:** Krystyna Szumelukowa, Convener of ISC  
John Clifford  
Ann Cormack  
Mary Gunn (online)  
Francis McManus  
William Duncan, Secretary of the General Council  
Philip Mawer, Convener of the Business Committee  
Gordon Cairns, Vice-Convener of the Business Committee  
Alison MacLeary, Assistant Secretary of the General Council

**In attendance:** Manya Buchan (FSSC, online)

**1. Welcome and apologies**

Krystyna Szumelukowa (KS) welcomed all to the second meeting of the session and invited VP International, Professor James Smith (JS), to speak to the Committee on the review of the University's Global Engagement Plan.

No apologies were received.

**2. Presentation from Professor James Smith, VP International,**

The review had been delayed owing to Covid disruptions and management changes to the University's Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Colleges, but is now being progressed and looking ahead to 2030. There is a focus on 4 key areas:

- Alignment
- A set of principles around internationalisation and activities
- A more strategic focus around partnerships and regions
- Student mobility

**Alignment**

- The new International Strategy (IS) will align closely with the Research and Enterprise (R&E) strategy, looking at research incomes and funding; developing strategic partnerships and how/where research impact is generated;
- Connect with the Curriculum Transformation (CT) programme (a work in progress) re how/what/where the University can carry out its teaching activities; a bigger focus on experiential learning and student mobility;
- IS will launch in the first quarter of 2024 along with a teaching and learning plan derived from the CT and R&E strategies, within a similar timeframe for delivery, and should clarify their connections.

**Principles**

- What it means to be international as well as what the University is doing internationally;
- Principles around academic freedom in international partnerships, duty of care, and how the University can best support partners in delivering contractual standards such as in health and safety.

## **Partnerships and Regions**

- Stronger focus on North America, Europe, Africa, S and SE Asia over the next 5-20 years;
- Diversification of the student population is an important factor;
- Recognition that India is a population of 1.2bn but only 1400 students from India currently study at the University, can do better here;
- Around 1000 students from Africa currently study at the University but an awareness that this continent has a fast-increasing youth population;
- Cement connections in those regions to support the best students to come to the University and review teaching practices in other parts of the world;
- Building deeper partnerships in North America e.g., Toronto and Cornell, which is a long-term partner;
- Collaboration with Rice University involves a connection with NASA;
- A shift post Covid to a less organic style of partnership approach and towards a more strategic partnership approach (as we have in Europe) regarding how universities would like to operate internationally;
- Looking to develop further partnerships in the west coast of America in research, joint teaching and student exchange which will have a regional as well as institutional focus;
- Focus efforts and energies on being more efficient and effective i.e., a smaller number of relationships and what can best be achieved together rather than individually.

## **Student mobility**

- University received funding of £4-5m a year from the Erasmus+ scheme;
- The Turing scheme (the UK Government replacement for Erasmus) provides only £1.2m a year and the funding is unstable and does not cover inbound students;
- Need to be more strategic in how to use this funding which is more constrained than Erasmus+ and respond to what students actually want in terms of experiential learning abroad e.g. work based placements and volunteering with organisations or spending only one semester away instead of two, and how the University can support that;
- More than 50% of our students are now international (many receive a mobility experience just being in Edinburgh);
- Environmental concerns - overseas students studying in Edinburgh could spend more time on projects based within Scotland and this would offer greater flexibility for students who cannot go abroad because of health reasons or caring responsibilities;
- Thought to be an effective way for international students to have tangible benefits in the country in which they have committed to spending 4 years;
- Recognition that home domiciled students can have an international experience from living in such a diverse campus.

## **People**

- Mastercard Foundation programme benefits students from Africa but looking at what the University can do to remove similar barriers to accessing learning opportunities in other parts of the world;
- Excellent humanitarian programme that Alan Mackay (Edinburgh Global) is leading on and will be launched in the next couple of months e.g. the University will offer 30-40 scholarships a year for students from conflict affected parts of the world;
- Supporting 10-12 academics from conflict affected regions (Ukraine, Africa and Middle East) to spend two years working at the University and enabled to bring their families to join them;

- Improved financial support for international colleagues e.g. visa costs, ILR, legal fees (best in sector);
- Transformational partnerships through creating alliances such as UNA EUROPA, increasing research impact and global access through diversifying student communities;
- Collaborating with key partners in Africa to gain a greater impact in the region e.g. WITS in South Africa, and developing international hubs in Ghana and Kenya;
- Case study approach – sourcing, communicating and celebrating the stories of successful international alumni.

## Discussion

- Making use of the infrastructure of active alumni groups around the world to support joint events and make connections;
- Hierarchy of partners in Africa – map (see slide) shows those at the highest level of transformational partnerships i.e. Wits, but developing activity with other regional hubs to e.g. support local students to get a PhD at lower cost by studying locally;
- The University has regional offices in Singapore, Mumbai, Shanghai, New York and Chile;
- University does not recruit as many students from India as other UK universities; reasons include the need to provide significant scholarships and Indian students prefer to apply to universities based in the London area where there are increased post work opportunities;
- Chinese students choosing to study at the UoE are driven by world rankings and degree quality;
- Focus more on North America and Indonesia, which has a rapidly growing middle class;
- Data from e.g. joint publications, health science, environmental and cultural heritage work can measure societal impact as well as anecdotal evidence of real life personal commitments and successes;
- UoE is a University of Sanctuary and committed to supporting its diverse community;
- Concerns over student living expenses and housing costs which are not covered by scholarship funding – University offers an accommodation guarantee for first year undergraduates and all international students and are looking at a future package of financial support;
- PM and WD will have a meeting with VP Philanthropy, Chris Cox, re greater shared understanding around the mutual benefits from international alumni engagement and will invite JS into these discussions;
- KS mentioned the support available from the Consular Corps and its greater potential in line with the Memorandum of Understanding with the university;
- MG went to the recent fundraising alumni event in Washington which was well attended.

**Action:** - *Slides used during the presentation will be shared with the Committee*

KS thanked JS for a very informative presentation and requested the opportunity for further consultation pre-launch of the IS in anticipation of positive statements to emphasise the role of alumni at home and across the world to support the university in delivering on its 4 key areas.

### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2023

The minute had been previously circulated and was approved.

### 4. Matters arising from the minutes of 26 October 2023

#### Item 5:

- Chris Cox has followed up with Ann Cormack;
- Ann Cormack has approached the London alumni club and identified 45k members in LinkedIn

**Action: - AM will send KS contact information for Gabriel Goldberg (alumni club Brussels) and Victor Loewenstein (alumni club London) to arrange a meet up as they will be attending the GC February 2024 HYM.**

**5. Updates from Edinburgh Global**

No papers had been received for the meeting intended for 26 October.

**Action: - KS will liaise with JS re proposals for a future meeting about the University's engagement in SE Asia.**

**6. Any other competent business**

There will be one meeting of each of the Standing Committees in Jan/Feb 2024 and a further meeting will be scheduled for later in the year.

**7. Date of next meeting**

Tbc.

**Public Affairs Standing Committee Meeting held on Thursday 19 October 2023**

**Online via Teams**

**Present:** Ms Candice Donnelly (Convener of PASC)  
Mr Arron Ashton  
Ms Elisabeth Feldstein  
Mr Devin Scobie  
Dr William Duncan (Secretary of the General Council)  
Sir Philip Mawer (Convener of the Business Committee)

**In attendance:** Ms Ann Cormack (ISC)  
Alison MacLeary (Assistant Secretary of the General Council)

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Convener of PASC welcomed the committee, including new member, Arron Ashton (previously ISC), to its first meeting of the session.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Gordon Cairns and Kate Hawley.

**3. Minutes from the meeting held on 17 May 2023**

The minutes were approved.

**4. Matters arising from the meeting held on 17 May 2023**

None.

**5. Community Plan Report**

- CD drew attention to the 'University of Edinburgh Community Grant Scheme' document, previously circulated; an evaluation report prepared by Communications and Marketing, and which looks at the impact of the University's work in its local community over the last 5 years;
- Noted the volume of projects and the money raised;
- The Committee agreed that this was a positive news story for the University and could be shared more widely via General Council communications, e.g. *Billet* and the website, to raise awareness of the breadth of activity happening in this area, and to encourage members to be more closely involved in the work of the University by participating, for example, through volunteer community schemes.

**6. Update and discussion around GC comms**

- The committee met as a focus group to examine ways in which the GC could be more proactive in its communications;
- The GC currently has a relatively small voter base, no social media presence and no regular updates going out to members, but does produce a hard copy and email version of its publication *Billet*;

- The primary purpose of Billet is to promote GC statutory meetings and provide the agenda and papers; the winter edition also includes notification of candidates for election to the Business Committee;
- Election materials are now sent out separately through Civica so Billet will now only include photos of candidates and basic information;
- Explore including celebratory content about what the University is doing more broadly and encourage members to participate in university initiatives;
- Billet goes out to approx. 137k by email and 800 by post but only around 100 members attend the Half-Yearly meetings in February and June each year and so encouraging members to be more active in the attendance is a key message;
- The production and distribution of Billet was previously managed through the University's Communications and Marketing team (CAM) but because the remit for this division has pivoted to an emphasis on marketing rather than communications, it has been necessary to outsource this key area of GC activity to an external design firm, Lane, based in Ferry Road;
- The introductory meeting with the Lane agency on 12 October provided an opportunity to discuss an innovative electronic version of Billet that effectively conveys key messaging i.e. emphasise the February HYM is a unique opportunity to speak directly to the Principal and ask questions and links to the GC website e.g. Convener reports and other information of note;
- Lane quote for producing the winter version of Billet was around £14k – estimate around £25k for both winter and summer editions which is a substantial increase from around £4.5k which was the recharge from CAM;
- Because of time constraints, the winter issue this time will be based on the paper version (with a pdf digital back up) and the brief to the designers was to give Billet a fresh new appearance to entice people to pick it up and read it;
- A more radical approach will be taken with the Summer issue and focus on creating a new electronic format which includes more imagery, infographics and quotes, possibly video material;
- It was noted that work on the Summer issue of Billet would need to begin shortly as it would take around 4 months for the Lane Agency to design and build the digital version which will go out in early May; Lane Agency will provide a quote for this and another briefing meeting would be arranged with the GC office;
- Include more thematic content as publicity for University activity and linking to involvement from alumni clubs etc. as part of their continuing connection with the University; the other Standing Committees, particularly ISC, could be approached for ideas and suggestions.

***Action: - AM will share with PASC the various stages of the design concept for Winter Billet for feedback***

### **7. PASC's work plan 23-24**

- The committee will meet with Dave Gorman, Director, and Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, Department of Responsibility and Sustainability, at its next meeting on 29 November;
- Discussion points could include the size and shape of the University and how the buildings within its estate can be made more environmentally friendly.

**Action:-**

***The Convener invited the committee to feed in any questions for the speakers in advance of the meeting.***

Meetings in Semester Two

- CD mentioned recent media accounts, which spoke about funding support for the University's student newspaper saving it from closure;
- Invite a speaker to update on communications around the University's Race Review and report on the steps involved in the ongoing process.

**Action:-**

***AM will contact representatives from The Student newspaper to invite them to attend a meeting in the Spring.***

**8. Future Events**

The Business Committee Christmas Reception 2023

- Will be held in the Informatics Building on **Tuesday** 12 December at 5.15pm
- The Provost will represent the University on behalf of the Principal who will be overseas at this time
- EU Chamber Choir will perform the annual carol service;
- Invitations will be sent out shortly
- HYM, Saturday 17 February 2024, McEwan Hall and Playfair Library
- Douglas Alexander has agreed to give the after lunch speech, focusing on his international activity
- HYM, Saturday 15 June 2024, Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI)
- WD and AM will meet later this month with the Director of EFI, Professor Chris Speed, and the Director of Operations, Jude Henderson, to discuss the planning, and whether this will be a stand-alone event or jointly as part of EFI's programme of activities celebrating the University's long relationship with Artificial Intelligence;
- Currently looking at an alternative venue (i.e. Bayes Institute/Informatics Forum) in case of any delay with the scheduled opening date of this new building.

**9. Any other business**

The committee discussed the pros and cons of using the Raeburn room or the ECCI for future BC meetings. The key issue, given increasing online participation in meetings, is which works best for a hybrid format.

**10. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 29 November, 4.30pm in the Cheviot Room.

**Public Affairs Standing Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 29 November 2023  
4.30pm in the Cheviot Room, Charles Stewart House**

**Present:** Ms Candice Donnelly, Convener of PASC  
Mr Arron Ashton (online)  
Ms Elisabeth Feldstein (online)  
Ms Kate Hawley (online)  
Mr Devin Scobie  
Dr William Duncan, Secretary of the General Council – (online)  
Alison MacLeary, Assistant Secretary of the General Council  
Sir Philip Mawer, Convener of the Business Committee – (online)  
Mr Gordon Cairns, Vice-Convener of the Business Committee

**In attendance:** Mr Dave Gorman, Director, Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability  
Ms Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Convener of PASC, Candice Donnelly (CD), welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Dave Gorman (DG), Director of the University's department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability, and Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, to the committee to talk about the University's social investment programme.

**2. Presentation from Dave Gorman, Director for Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS)**

- DG defined the remit of (SRS) as follows:
  - **Sustainability:**
  - the challenges of enabling the University to make positive environmental change within hard biophysical limits e.g. climate change and air/water pollution;
  - Social Impact – the University's activities which generate a positive social impact and
  - cover areas such as community relations and grant schemes; modern apprenticeships; the living wage; procurement/contracts and associated training and benefits;
  - The University is in a position to make significant investment contributions which can lead to valuable societal benefits and enhance local community wellbeing;
- £700m in a Treasury Fund and £500m in an endowment fund which it can use to make responsible investments and which address the Social and Civic Responsibility elements of Strategy 2030 i.e. become a zero carbon/waste university; widen participation in higher education and support inclusion and work together with local communities;
- Report on concerns raised over issues within the wider global supply chain e.g. modern slavery and deforestation;
- The University is 1<sup>st</sup> in the UK and 4<sup>th</sup> in the world in the global sustainability rankings;



- The University has the third largest university endowment in the UK and is operationalising “social responsibility” across the whole institution;
- An opportunity to deliver impact beyond just teaching and research through innovation and investment to develop an ecosystem of social enterprise using business models to invest profits back into companies created for a positive social purpose;
- Key principles of the fund:
  - A target return of 3-4% was agreed (CPI+1.5%);
  - The SIF was drawn from University Treasury funds, not endowment;
  - DG reports to a dedicated ESG committee set up to provide advice and manage the fund, spanning existing structures and processes;
  - Objectives linked to research and teaching; opportunities for environmental and social good and reputational benefits;
- Fund rules:
  - Limited to one investment at a time which deliver to broader University objectives;
  - Capital protection prioritised;
  - Focus on ethical funding and allocation of funds to Edinburgh and City Region Deal for Scotland; some UK investment;
  - Expected completion of SIF allocation in 2024;
- Case study examples:
  - **Prosper Social Finance** - the UK’s first socially responsible investment fund run entirely by students;
  - Received a £50k investment from the University’s Social Investment Fund;
  - Running since 2018 – 100+ students trained via Prosper’s ESG Analyst programme;
  - A partner of Invisible Cities, an Edinburgh social enterprise employing people who have experienced homelessness to run tours;
  - **A housing scheme delivered by homeless charity Simon Community Scotland** which offers housing to vulnerable people and gives the opportunity to purchase their own homes;
  - **A project run by ATTIX CIC and supported by Thrive renewables** to develop the first community owned wind turbine where profits from electricity sales will be invested in the community;
- Initial reflections on the SIF model include conversations with the Scottish Government, fund managers and social enterprises to gather evidence and report on the benefits; possibility of scaling the model in collaboration with other universities; relies on a low interest environment so consider whether the model will remain viable as interest rates rise; investing in additional staff resource to measure social impact and outcomes recognising this as a core part of University business.

### Discussion

- Investments were intended as long-term commitments (2018-2024) and on track to deliver a 5-6% return but noted that the Covid period had some detrimental effects on the investment portfolio;
- Strong support from the Senior Leadership Team but evidence required to illustrate that this should be part of the University’s core activity;

- University is not directly involved in incidents of modern slavery and engages in ethical screening, but mindful that real examples do exist in the wider supply chain and this is difficult to monitor;
- The University is part of a network of universities interested in positive investment and is engaged in information exchange to ensure partners are driven by the same agenda e.g. the Church of England.

***Action:- The Secretary will arrange a follow up meeting with DG to discuss how to better manage the General Council's Scholarship and Legacy funds through diversification in ethical investments.***

CD thanked DG for a fascinating and inspiring presentation.

**3. Apologies for absence**

None.

**4. Minutes from the meeting held on 19 October 2023**

The minutes were approved.

**5. Matters arising from the meeting held on 19 October 2023**

- Item 6: CD had been sent the initial digital version of Billet received from the Lane Agency and was asked to feedback;
- Item 7: Representatives from The Student newspaper will be contacted in due course to address a future PASC meeting in Semester 2.

**6. Future Events**

- Business Committee Christmas Reception – 7 December 2023
  - Invitations had been sent out and responses received indicate that the event will be well attended;
- HYM, Saturday 17 February 2024, McEwan Hall and Playfair Library
  - The Secretary advised that contingency planning may be necessary in the event of a further student demonstration such as had taken place outside the McEwan Hall in February 2023;
- HYM, Saturday 15 June 2024, Edinburgh Futures Institute

***Action:- Input from PASC re how the event on the theme of Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be organised and promoted.***

**7. Any other business**

- WD reported on a recent positive meeting with PM and Chris Cox, Director of Development and Alumni (D & A), about how the GC and D & A can work better together around alumni communications - given their complementarity of roles and shared constituency – particularly in relation to engaging with international alumni clubs;
- It was agreed that any additional communication from the GC should be about how its governance function could be enhanced by attracting greater involvement from

the alumni community rather than promoting other news from the University, which is within the remit of D & A;

- A further meeting with CC will include VP International, Professor James Smith, about how best to communicate with the University's international community.

***Action:- PASC to consider the type and frequency of GC messaging and what specific comms material the GC might wish to produce in addition to Billet- which is primarily a statutory publication - of a more thematic and discursive nature and which might relate to GC events e.g. the June HYM on the subject of AI.***

**8. Preparations for next meeting**

- The GC office will soon begin the arrangements for SC meetings in Semester 2;
- AM will liaise with CD re dates for PASC meetings.



University Court  
West Court, Edinburgh College of Art, 74 Lauriston Place, Edinburgh EH3 9DF  
Monday, 4 December 2023

*This meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Andrew Grant Bequest (which comprises the members of the University Court).*

**AGENDA [Version for General Council Business Committee, indicating whether papers are open or closed]**

**OPENING ITEMS**

- 1 Minute [OPEN version of minute to be published shortly] A1, A2**  
To approve the minute of the meeting and note of the seminar held on 9 October 2023
- 2 Matters Arising [OPEN] & Review of Action Log [CLOSED] A3**  
To raise any matters arising and review the Action Log
- 3 Principal's Report [OPEN] B**  
To note a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal
- 4 Committee Business**
  - Senior Lay Member's Overview [OPEN] Verbal
  - Court USS Sub-Group [OPEN] C1
  - Policy & Resources Committee [CLOSED] C2
  - Nominations Committee [OPEN] C3
  - Audit & Risk Committee [CLOSED] C4
  - Remuneration Committee Annual Report [CLOSED] C5
  - Knowledge Strategy Committee [CLOSED] C6
  - Senate [OPEN] C7

**KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION**

- 5 People and Money – External Review Report [CLOSED but the External Review Report and a summary management response will be published shortly] D**  
To consider the report presented by PA Consulting and the management response presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary
- 6 Performance Measures to Support Strategy 2030: 2022-23 Year-End Report [CLOSED but measures will feature in the published Annual Report and Accounts] E**  
To consider a paper presented by Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning
- 7 Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report [CLOSED] F**  
To consider the annual report presented by Douglas Millican, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee

- |           |  |                                     |
|-----------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Risk Management Post Year-End Assurance Statement [CLOSED]</b><br>To <i>consider</i> the assurance statement presented by Catherine Martin,<br>Vice-Principal Corporate Services  | <b>G</b>                            |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Finance</b><br>To <i>consider</i> papers presented by Lee Hamill, Director of Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Director of Finance’s Report [CLOSED]</b></li> <li>• <b>Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23 [CLOSED but will be published in January]</b></li> <li>• <b>Letter of Representation [CLOSED]</b></li> </ul> | <b>H1</b><br><b>H2</b><br><b>H3</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Grade Scale Review [CLOSED but will be announced shortly]</b><br>To <i>approve</i> a paper presented by Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor  | <b>I</b>                            |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Student Experience Update [CLOSED]</b><br>To <i>consider</i> a paper presented by Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students  | <b>J</b>                            |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Students’ Association and Sports Union Reports</b><br>To <i>consider</i> the reports presented by Sharan Atwal, Students’ Association President <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Students’ Association Report [OPEN]</b></li> <li>• <b>Sports Union Report [OPEN]</b></li> </ul>   | <b>K1</b><br><b>K2</b>              |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Edinburgh Futures Institute [CLOSED]</b><br>To <i>approve</i> a paper presented by Gary Jebb, Director of Place   | <b>L</b>                            |
| <b>14</b> | <b>Research &amp; Innovation Strategy [CLOSED but strategy was approved and will be published shortly]</b><br>To <i>approve</i> the strategy presented by Christina Boswell, Vice-Principal Research & Enterprise  | <b>M</b>                            |

**ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

- |           |   |          |
|-----------|---|----------|
| <b>15</b> | <b>Externally Facilitated Court Effectiveness Review [OPEN aside from costings, which are commercially confidential]</b><br>To <i>approve</i> | <b>N</b> |
| <b>16</b> | <b>General Council Membership &amp; Registration Ordinance [OPEN]</b><br>To <i>approve</i>  | <b>O</b> |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Health and Safety Annual Report [OPEN aside from one section and annexes]</b><br>To <i>note</i>  | <b>P</b> |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Development &amp; Alumni: Granting of Probate [CLOSED – relates to an individual legacy]</b><br>To <i>approve</i>                          | <b>Q</b> |
| <b>19</b> | <b>Donations &amp; Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity [CLOSED]</b><br>To <i>note</i>  | <b>R</b> |

**20 Resolutions [OPEN]**

To approve

**S**

**21 Any Other Business [None raised]**

To consider any other matters

**22 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 26 February 2024, 9.30am-5pm (including Court seminar)

**Business Committee – 7 December 2023**

**Proposed changes to Ordinance 186**

The attached report has been circulated to University Court and will be considered at its meeting on Monday 4 December

The report follows on from that presented to the October meeting of the Business Committee and sets out the case for widening the membership of the General Council.

The attached report has the support of the University Secretary and the staff in Development and Alumni who would have to implement the data management processes arising from the changes, if approved

I should not wish to pre-empt what Court will decide, but if it does agree to proceed as recommended, then as it will involve a change in an Ordinance, the Court is required by statute to consult various groups, including the General Council.

It is for the Business Committee to decide how this consultation with General Council members is handled, and the following is recommended

- Email notice sent in mid- December from the Secretary inviting comments by end January on the proposed changes
- Details of the proposed changes available on the General Council website
- Reminder email to GC members from the Secretary in mid-January
- Report to Business Committee in early February summarising the responses received
- Convener's report to the 17 February Half Yearly meeting to present responses and allow discussion then if necessary
- Secretary to notify Court Services on 19 February of outcome of consultation
- Report to Court meeting on 26 February to decide whether to proceed and if necessary, any further modifications to the revised Ordinance.

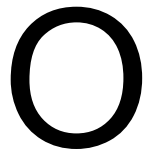
Dr William Duncan

30 November 2023

Secretary to General Council







**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**4 December 2023**

**General Council Membership & Registration Ordinance**

**Description of paper**

1. University of Edinburgh Ordinance No. 186 (Appendix 1) has defined the criteria for membership of the General Council (GC) since 1991. At its meeting on 29 November 2021 Court approved that the Ordinance be reviewed to address unsatisfactory clauses which had been identified as anachronistic and causing confusion. These issues have been addressed in the attached Draft New Ordinance (Appendix 2).

2. The current Ordinance (Appendix 1) offers membership only to those with University degrees or to senior academic staff. These restrictions do not reflect that the University now confers other awards to graduates and are at odds with the value attached to an inclusive multi-professional University community articulated in Strategy 2030. The review identified the University grade structure as a means of defining comparable criteria for academic and professional staff. The criteria for staff membership of the GC defined in the Draft New Ordinance (Appendix 2) reflect the University's contemporary ethos while also recognising the requirements of the role and responsibilities of GC members.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. Court is asked to approve the transmission of the Draft New Ordinance as set out in Appendix 2 for statutory consultation.

**Background and context**

4. The report presented to University Court in November 2021 proposed that Ordinance 186 should be amended substantially so that GC membership could be conferred on:

- i. all those graduating with academic awards approved by Senate, not just degrees;
- ii. all administrative, professional, and technical staff at grade 8 and above, to give parity with similar grade academic staff already eligible to join General Council;
- iii. all Honorary awards and appointments – not just Honorary Fellows and Honorary graduates.

5. Court agreed to 'The initiation of a process of review of Ordinance No. 186 (General Council Membership & Registration) with a view to amending the criteria for General Council membership to resolve identified issues set out in the paper'.

6. During that review period, further consideration of the resource and implementation requirements was made by Development and Alumni (D&A) as it manages the General Council (GC) Register within its Charity Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database. This identified practical data management issues, particularly around extending membership to all Honorary appointments. Also, major changes were about to take place to the CRM systems.

7. Now that the changes to the CRM system have bedded down, it was decided to carry out a more detailed review of the resource implications of the proposed changes to Ordinance 186 and this has been carried out by a working group which included members of the D&A Services Team and the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary of the GC.
8. The Working Group report presented to the University Secretary concluded that:
  - a. Most (but not all) of the proposed changes to Ordinance 186 as recommended in the previous report to Court would be straightforward to incorporate into the General Council Register.
  - b. Any additional resource requirements arising from bringing in new categories would be temporary and manageable through phased implementation of changes to incorporate existing staff or award holders who would become eligible.
  - c. The main change from the previous proposal should be not to extend General Council membership to all Honorary appointments, such as Hon Professors, Hon Readers, Hon Senior Lecturers or Hon Lecturers. This earlier proposal arose from confusion over the category of Honorary Fellows eligible to join General Council. When Court decided in 1991 to include this group, it was meant to apply only to those awarded University Honorary Fellowships on the recommendation of Senate, and not to College appointed Honorary Fellows, but this distinction was not made clear enough in subsequent documentation.
  - d. The data management difficulties associated with including hundreds of College Honorary appointments in the General Council Register are complex, time consuming and onerous. As a result, there should be no extension of eligibility to include College appointed Honorary Fellows, Honorary Professors or Honorary Lecturers, as similar data management issues would arise.

## Discussion

9. The proposed amendments to unsatisfactory clauses of the current Ordinance are shown in red in the Draft New Ordinance (Appendix 2).
  - (i) **Not all who now graduate receive degrees.** The current Ordinance restricts GC membership to those awarded degrees. In addition to degrees, there are currently about 30 other awards that can be made by the University, some of which confer the status of being a graduate of the University. Clause 1(a) has been reworded with input from the Director of Student Systems & Administration to reflect the contemporary flexibility in awards and inclusivity, while maintaining the University's formal academic standards, by permitting all graduates of the University to become members of GC. For example, the new wording opens GC membership to those graduating with postgraduate diplomas or those completing joint degrees with partner Universities. This change is reflected in the wording of Clauses 3 and 4(a) of the Appendix 2 which substitute the term 'academic award' for degree.
  - (ii) **Anomalies.** The 'ex officio' GC membership of the University Chaplain has now been specified in Clause 1(c). The invitation to retain membership is made

consistently to members demitting office in Clause 1(e) or completing their term of appointment after 3 years in Clause 1(f).

(iii) **Anachronism.** The registration fee referred to in Clauses 1(d-e) and Clause 7 of the current Ordinance (Appendix I) was discontinued by the University in 2012 and has been omitted from the Draft New Ordinance.

(iv) **Administrative simplification.** The changes create an opportunity to consider data flows and processes with the aim of increased efficiency. This will continue in the implementation phase. Offering membership for staff on appointment would be administratively simpler than initiating that after one year in post (Clause 1(c) (iv) of Appendix I). The current reference to retirement - Appendix I, clause 1 (e) - has been removed. The Draft New Ordinance retains the criterion for former staff who were members of General Council and were employed by the University for at least 3 years prior to leaving to be invited to retain their GC membership on leaving the University, except for those who leave because they have been dismissed or following disciplinary action.

(v) **Parity of membership for academic and professional staff.** The academic job titles formerly used to define GC membership criteria translate to University Grade 8 and above. Use of the University Grade profiles offers a means of achieving comparable criteria for professional staff. Clinical academics have their own scale. The wording of the relevant clauses 1(e & g) of Appendix 2 was provided by HR.

### **Resource implications**

10. Any additional resource requirements arising from bringing in new categories would be temporary and manageable through phased implementation of changes to incorporate existing staff or award holders who would become eligible. Potentially the largest group of additional members of GC are those who graduated with awards which were not degrees but as they are already in the D&A CRM database, including them in the General Council Register is straightforward.

### **Risk Management**

11. The General Council Register sits within a database managed by D&A with close attention to data protection legislation and data security. A detailed Data Protection Impact Assessment of the proposed changes was carried out by the Working Party in its review of implementation and this was approved by the University Data Protection Officer.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

12. A more diverse membership would ensure that the General Council was better equipped to play its part in supporting the University to deliver its Strategy 2030 outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals.

13. A key issue for ensuring a contemporary database of active GC members is to align with the University's digital strategy which makes more effective use of digital technology to engage with members sustainably e.g. targeted communication; voting; hybrid events.

## **Equality & Diversity**

14. Current criteria for GC membership discriminate in favour of academic staff to the exclusion of other staff groups. One aim of the review is to propose a more equitable basis for staff membership and hence a GC membership which better reflects the diversity of the University's community. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out by the Working Party. This has since been approved by the University Secretary and the proposed changes will contribute to meeting the University's general equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

## **Next steps/implications**

15. Court approval of the transmission of the Draft New Ordinance triggers a statutory 8-week period of consultation with Senate and the General Council which is required to inform the preparation of the final draft of the New Ordinance. This final draft must be approved by Court before onward transmission for consideration by the Scottish Universities Committee and, in due course, for approval by the Privy Council.

## **Consultation**

16. It is recommended the consultation period begins on 29 December 2023 as this would allow consideration of the Draft New Ordinance at the meeting of Senate on 7 February and at the General Council Half Yearly Meeting on 17 February 2024. Given that 29 December 2023 falls during the University's Christmas and New Year closure period the consultation documents will be circulated in mid-December, to give all consultees at least 8 weeks not including closure period to consider. Court would be informed of the outcome of the consultation at its meeting on 26 February 2024.

## **Further information**

### **17. Author**

Dr William Duncan  
Secretary to General Council  
Email: [William.Duncan@ed.ac.uk](mailto:William.Duncan@ed.ac.uk)

### **Presenter**

Lady Wolffe  
General Council Assessor

## **Freedom of Information**

18. Open paper.

## Appendix 1

### UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH ORDINANCE No 186

#### GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION

At Edinburgh, the Eighth day of July, Nineteen hundred and ninety-one years.

WHEREAS the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, Section 10(1), provides that the University Court shall cause to be maintained a register of members of the General Council in accordance with provisions to be prescribed by Ordinance:

AND WHEREAS in terms of Sections 3 of the said Act and of paragraphs 1 and 5- of Part I of Schedule 2 thereto, the University Court has power to amend by Ordinance the composition, powers, and functions of, 'inter alia', the General Council, and to prescribe the conditions under which the register of members of the General Council is to be maintained:

AND WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to amend the composition of the General Council and to amend the conditions under which the register of members of the General Council is to be maintained:

THEREFORE the University Court of the University of Edinburgh, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, and with particular reference to paragraphs 1 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby statutes and ordains:

1. The General Council of the University of Edinburgh shall consist of:

(a) all persons on whom the University has conferred degrees other than Honorary Degrees, whose names shall be recorded in the Register of Graduates referred to in Section 3 of this Ordinance, in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance:

(b) all persons on whom the University has conferred an Honorary Degree or on whom it has conferred the title of Honorary Fellow of the University.

(c) during their tenure of office -

(i) the Chancellor of the University;

(ii) the members of the University Court;

(iii) the Professors of the University;

(iv) all Readers, Senior Lecturers, and Lecturers in the University who have held any such office for a period of one year:

(d) former members of the University Court and former Professors who have elected to pay the statutory registration fee, if any.

(e) former Readers, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers who have retired after holding any such office in the University for a period of three years and who have elected to pay the statutory registration fee, if any.

2. The University Court shall from time to time appoint a Registrar of the General Council, upon such conditions as the Court may determine, and the Court shall provide such assistance for the performance of the Registrar's duties as it may consider necessary. The office of Registrar may be held in conjunction with any other office in the University

3. The Registrar shall ensure that a Register of Graduates is maintained, recording the full names of all persons on whom the University has conferred a degree other than an Honorary Degree, the address of each graduand at the time of registration for graduation, the date of graduation, and the degree conferred.

4. The Registrar shall also ensure that a Register of Members of the General Council is maintained, recording

(a) the full names in alphabetical order and addresses (where known) of all graduates whose names are recorded in the Register of Graduates and who are not known to be dead, or presumed dead failing contrary information after eighty years from the date of graduation, together with, in each case, the first degree recorded in the Register of Graduates, and the year of graduation in that degree;

(b) the full names, in alphabetical order, and addresses (where known) of all other members of the General Council not known to be dead and the offices in virtue of which they qualify for membership.

5. <sup>1</sup> .....

6. If any person whose name is not included in the Register of Members - shall consider that it should be so included, it shall be competent for him or her to appeal to the University Court if the Court considers that such person's name should be included in the Register of Members - in terms of this Ordinance, it shall direct the Registrar to amend the Register accordingly. The decision of the Court shall be final.

7. The University Court shall have power to decide whether a fee shall be required as a condition of graduation in any degree or as a condition of membership of the General Council for those categories of persons mentioned in Section 1(d) and (e) of this Ordinance, and to fix the amount of any such fee. Those categories of persons mentioned in Section 1(b) of this Ordinance shall not be required to pay such a fee.

8. Ordinance No 174 (General Council Membership and Registration) is hereby revoked.

9. This Ordinance shall come into force after its approval by Her Majesty in Council on a date to be determined by the University Court.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF .....

Approved by Order in Council, dated 11 February 1992.

<sup>1</sup> Omitted by Ordinance No. 202, now superseded by Ordinance No. 213

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH ORDINANCE No 217

GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION

At Edinburgh, the [Number] day of [Month], [Year]

WHEREAS the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, Section 10(1), provides that the University Court shall cause to be maintained a register of members of the General Council in accordance with provisions to be prescribed by Ordinance:

AND WHEREAS in terms of Sections 3 of the said Act and of paragraphs 1 and 5- of Part I of Schedule 2 thereto, the University Court has power to amend by Ordinance the composition, powers, and functions of, `inter alia`, the General Council, and to prescribe the conditions under which the register of members of the General Council is to be maintained:

AND WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to amend the composition of the General Council and to amend the conditions under which the register of members of the General Council is to be maintained:

THEREFORE the University Court of the University of Edinburgh, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, and with particular reference to paragraphs 1 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby statutes and ordains:

1. The General Council of the University of Edinburgh shall consist of:

(a) all persons who **having successfully met the requirements of an academic award other than an Honorary Degree and have graduated from the University of Edinburgh and** whose names shall be recorded in the Register of Graduates referred to in Section 3 of this Ordinance, in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance:

(b) all persons on whom the University has conferred an Honorary Degree or on whom it has conferred the award of Honorary Fellow of the University. [Note: this provision does not apply to those appointed by Colleges or Schools as Honorary Fellows.]

(c) during their tenure of office -

- (i) the Chancellor of the University;
- (ii) the members of the University Court;
- (iii) **the Chaplain to the University.**

[Drafting note: all Professors, Readers, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers are now included under (d) below]

**(d) during the tenure of their appointment: all staff of the University appointed to roles assigned to University Grade 8 or above and their grade equivalent(s).**

(e) those 'ex officio' members in Clause 1(c) who accept the invitation to retain their membership of the General Council on demitting office or completion of their period of appointment; [Drafting note: former Professors are now included under (f) below]

(f) former staff (admitted previously as per Clause (d) above) who accept the invitation to retain their membership of the General Council after being employed by the University for a period of at least three years in a role assigned to Grade 8 or above or equivalent and who leave University employment except when dismissed or in other similar categories of case as may be determined by the Registrar.

2. The University Court shall from time to time appoint a Registrar of the General Council, upon such conditions as the Court may determine, and the Court shall provide such assistance for the performance of the Registrar's duties as it may consider necessary. The office of Registrar may be held in conjunction with any other office in the University

3. The Registrar shall ensure that a Register of Graduates is maintained, recording the full names of all persons on whom the University has conferred an **academic award** other than an Honorary Degree, the address of each graduand at the time of registration for graduation, the date of graduation, and the **award** conferred.

4. The Registrar shall also ensure that a Register of Members of the General Council is maintained, recording

(a) the full names in alphabetical order and addresses (where known) of all graduates whose names are recorded in the Register of Graduates and who are not known to be dead, or presumed dead failing contrary information after eighty years from the date of graduation, together with, in each case, the first **academic award** recorded in the Register of Graduates, and the year of graduation in that **academic award**.

(b) the full names, in alphabetical order, and addresses (where known) of all other members of the General Council not known to be dead and the offices in virtue of which they qualify for membership.

5. .... [Omitted by Ordinance No. 202, now superseded by Ordinance No. 213]

5. If any person whose name is not included in the Register of Members shall consider that it should be so included, it shall be competent for him or her to appeal to the University Court **and** if the Court considers that such person's name should be included in the Register of Members - in terms of this Ordinance, it shall direct the Registrar to amend the Register accordingly. The decision of the Court shall be final.

6. Ordinance No **186** (General Council Membership and Registration) is hereby revoked.

7. This Ordinance shall come into force after its approval by **His** Majesty in Council on a date to be determined by the University Court.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF **these presents are sealed with the Common Seal of the University Court of the University of Edinburgh and subscribed on behalf of the Court in terms of the Requirements of the Writing (Scotland) Act 1995**



*[signature to be added]*  
*Professor Sir Peter Mathieson*  
Member of the University Court

*[signature to be added]*  
*Leigh Chalmers*  
Vice-Principal & University Secretary

Approved by Order in Council, dated *[insert date when known]*

**ITEM 7**

**Marking and Assessment Boycott**

In response to an earlier request to Colm Harmon, Vice Principal (Students) for an update on the Marking and Assessment Boycott, the note below has now helpfully been provided by Lucy Evans, (Deputy Secretary – Students)

I have asked Lucy for information on the number of continuing students still affected as a legacy of the Boycott. If this information is received before the Business Committee meets, an oral report can be given

WD

7 December 2023

The national marking and assessment boycott (MAB) was called off by UCU on 6 September. We communicated with our students throughout and we confirmed that the first available chance for marks to be reviewed and awards made was at the October Boards of Examiners, which are required to ensure we maintain robust grading and academic integrity. Following Board review and processing, by mid-November that all MAB-impacted final year students have now been awarded. Winter graduations have recently taken place and a return to the joyous celebrations for all students awarded.

We progressed all continuing students into the current academic year, including those with marks outstanding due to the MAB to minimise disruption. We are working with continuing students to assure they have all their marks early in the new year and will work with individual students on any required reassessments are complete in time for the start of the next academic year.

UCU held a national ballot in October and were unsuccessful in meeting the required participation threshold. As a result there is no mandate to take further action at this time.

## General Council Business Committee – 7 December 2023

### Secretary's Report

#### 1. Billet

Two editions of Billet are issued each year to General Council members primarily to inform them of the forthcoming Half Yearly Meetings in February and June, and to provide information on the work of the Business Committee and the Standing Committees.

800 members receive paper copies of Billet and c. 140,000 are sent it electronically. The extended production schedule and much of the cost relates to producing the paper copies.

Hitherto, Billet was produced in-house by CAM (Communications and Marketing) but it is no longer able to do so and this has been outsourced to Lane Agency, which has completely redesigned Billet in an attempt to attract more General Council members to read it and as a result attend the Half Yearly Meeting, either in person or online.

There is a significant increase in the cost arising from outsourcing the production of Billet, as well as much additional work falling to the General Council Office.

#### 2. Election for Business Committee 2024/25

There are 13 Candidates competing for 7 places on the Business Committee next year and details about the Candidates, their Proposers and Seconders is given in Appendix 1. This information also appears on the General Council website and in Billet.

The election will again be handled by Civica Election Services, with voting papers issued in early January and the results announced at the HYM on 17 February.

#### 3. Election of next Rector

The Rector is elected by students and staff every three years. The next election will be from Tuesday 27 February to Friday 1 March 2024.

In the absence of the Chancellor, the Rector chairs General Council Half Yearly Meetings

#### 4. Draft Resolution Nos. 112/2023 – 114/2023

These Resolutions were approved by correspondence by the Business Committee

#### 5. Protocol for re-appointment of General Council Assessors to Court

This Protocol produced between the Business Committee and Court was discussed with the Assessors who are also basically content with it. The final stage is for Court Services to draw up a time line for the various stages so these are well aligned with the annual cycle for other appointments to Court. Due to staff changes and other workload pressures on Court Services, doing this has been delayed but will be discussed at meeting with the newly appointed Head of Court Services, Dan Wedgwood on 7 December

Dr William Duncan

Secretary to General Council

December 2023

**General Council Election, February 2024**

**Appendix 1**

**Candidates for membership of the Business Committee**

The following nominations have been received for the election of seven members of the Business Committee to serve from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2024

**Dr Nikhil Agarwal, PhD 2018**

*Proposed by* Dr Luis Soares, PhD 2018

*Seconded by* Mr Nisheeth Srivastava, MSc 2011

As CEO of IIT of Kanpur Incubator and AI Center, India's largest tech incubator, and a Fellow at the University of Cambridge's CRSD, I possess unique insights into global innovation networks. With my PhD from the University of Edinburgh, I deeply understand the Scottish academic environment and its potential for international collaboration. Leveraging this, I aim to enhance the University of Edinburgh's global engagement, particularly in technology and sustainability.

**Professor Richard John Andrews**

*Proposed by* Rev Dr Harriet Anne Harris

*Seconded by* Professor Sarah Prescott

My main contribution to the Business Committee would be on international and/or postgraduate matters: I have represented the University in China and worked extensively in Asia and the USA. I chaired the postgraduate report for the curriculum transformation project for the University. I served as Professor and Head of Moray House from October 2019 to October 2022. This position enabled me to work at high levels within the University, attending Senate and (by invitation) Court as well as to engage in the strategic and day-to-day management of a large School within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

**Mr Nava Vikhyat Teja Reddy Bapuram, MA 2017**

*Proposed by* Mr Rohan Mowgli Dodhia, BA 2015

*Seconded by* Mr Timothy Silvester, MA 2016

My expertise across UK and Scottish Governments from working on Housing, Trade, Economy, Health and Employability could directly contribute to the wide-ranging objectives of the Business Committee. I can bring my experience of good governance and delivering impact to this role immediately. I am passionate about the University of Edinburgh and would like to see its students excel in a range of sectors and industries. I would like to prioritise connecting Scottish businesses with students to mutually benefit from each other.

**Dr Lucy Marjery Amaryllis Blackburn, MSc 2016; PhD 2023**

*Proposed by Ms Lisa Noelle Mackenzie, MSc 2013*

*Seconded by Dr Katherine Helen Murray, MSc 2010; PhD 2015*

As a former Head of Higher Education in the Scottish Government, I have a long-time interest in how universities meet the substantial challenges they face. Since leaving the senior civil service, I have researched and published on higher education, especially funding and access, recently completing a PhD at the University on student finance, with an interest also in questions of academic freedom. I have lived in Edinburgh for many years and have a child at a LEAPS programme school. I would welcome the opportunity to use my experience to help the University flourish as a local, national and international institution.

**Mrs Almira Delibegovic-Broome, LLB 1995**

*Proposed by Mr Kenneth Young, LLB 1995*

*Seconded by Ms Candice Donnelly, LLB 2005; Dip LP 2006*

King's Counsel at the Scots Bar, with wide experience of commercial work. Originally from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Was a part-time tutor and lecturer at Edinburgh. Holds non-executive posts in private, public and charitable sectors. Attended Harvard twice (LLM student 2001-2002; Visiting Scholar 2018-19). Can contribute legal, business, academic and analytical skills, informed by that background.

Member of the Business Committee (2020-2024); Convener, Finance and Services Standing Sub-Committee (2022-2024).

**Mr Fraser John Macartney Forbes, BSc 1988**

*Proposed by Dr Mary Gunn, LLM 2014*

*Seconded by Mr Jeken Harry Andrew Elwin, BSc 1988*

Fraser is a leading Interim Supply Chain and Technology Director, with operational and board experience across a wide range of industry sectors, from eye-care to the MoD, the drinks industry to the Royal Mint. He is also a board member and investor in an eyewear start-up company.

Throughout his career, Fraser has acknowledged the part his time at UoE played and has been keen to nurture and encourage graduates in the workplace, including redesign of graduate recruitment at The Boots Group. He has tutored business school MSc students, and mentored young professionals with the Institute of Engineering and Technology.

**Professor John Calum MacDonald Gillies, BSc 1973; MBChB 1976**

*Proposed by Mrs Kirsty Joan MacGregor MA 1981; MBA 2001*

*Seconded by* The Hon Lady Sarah Poyntell LaBudde Wolffe KC, LLB 1989

I believe that my extensive experience in medicine, professional bodies and chairing committees could be of great value to the Council. I worked in Malawi and as a general practitioner and educator in Scotland for many years. I was Chair, Royal College of GPs in Scotland from 2010 to 2014 and deputy director of the Scottish School of Primary Care 2015-2019. [www.sspc.ac.uk](http://www.sspc.ac.uk). I speak Scottish Gaelic. In 2018, I was asked by the Scottish Government and Scottish Medical Schools Board to chair a report on increasing GP input into undergraduate medical education in Scotland, involving communications across all Scottish medical schools.

**Dr David James Robert Houston, PhD 1976; MBA 1987**

*Proposed by* Ms Krystyna Irena Szumelukowa, MPhil 2006

*Seconded by* Professor Stephen Gilbert Hillier OBE, DSc 1992

Originally a mathematical physicist, I returned to the Business School to prepare me for general management. My career has spanned both private and public sectors including: IT Director of Edinburgh City Council, Best Value Inspector, Strategic Finance Director, Change Management Consultant and Chair of a Community Council. I enjoyed my previous service on the Business Committee and wish to contribute more from a graduate perspective. This fine University is leading the world with its Futures Institute, Data-Driven Innovation and exciting City Region Deal. Let me help the Business Committee deal with these challenging areas and others on your behalf.

**Mr John Donald MacDonald, BSc 1990**

*Proposed by* Dr Mary Gunn, LLM 2014

*Seconded by* Mr Jonathan McGlynn, BSc 1988

I have spent over 30 years in the pharmaceutical industry, in both large pharma as well as CROs. Over the past 7 years my work has focussed on partnerships with VC funds and private equity groups who invest in biotech companies, and I believe that this experience could help bridge the academic and commercial worlds. As a member of the Business Committee, I could, for instance, help foster relationships between de novo life science companies spinning out of the university, and potential investors

**Mr Charles Joseph Napier, MA 1995**

*Proposed by* Mr Marcus Evans, LLB 1996

*Seconded by* Mrs Sarah Skinner, MA 1995

I am proud to be a graduate of Edinburgh having had a very enjoyable four years there, particularly when leading the University fencing team. My degree started me on my journey into communications, and I currently lead my own corporate communications and government relations consultancy with 30 consultants working across all four nations, Ireland and Brussels. I hope that my

near 30 years' experience in communications, including a period as an elected politician, means that I can contribute to the Business Committee particularly as I have experience of advising clients in the FE and wider education sector.

**Mrs Tamara Martine Carine Raidt, MSc 2022**

*Proposed by* Dr Miriam Claire Gamble

*Seconded by* Miss Olivia Grace Thomakos, MSc 2022

I graduated in 2022 in Creative Writing. As an international student with experience in education and communication, I believe I can contribute to the University's role on the global scene. My priority is to support Edinburgh's international community of students in all the challenges that they may face.

**Professor Graeme Alexander Reid, BSc 1977**

*Proposed by* Professor Stephen Gilbert Hillier OBE, DSc 1992

*Seconded by* Dr Donald Bruce Nelson, MBA 1990

I have been a member of the Business Committee for over three years and been glad to contribute to the present and future direction of the university. As a biochemist I have spent a long career, mostly at the University of Edinburgh, in all areas of academic life with significant contributions to research, teaching and management. Through working with the Academic Standing Committee, and being invited to become its next convener, I would like to continue to help enhance the experience of our large and diverse student population. I hope that you give me the chance to do so.

**Mr Alan Gordon Ross, MA 2013**

*Proposed by* Mr Richard Fitzpatrick, BSc 2013; MSc 2016; PhD 2021

*Seconded by* Mrs Sheila Ross, MA 1977

Having started my working life at the University, implementing the current website system, I'd enjoy being able to influence the direction of the University through Committee membership.

My experience in IT since then has given me a grounding in the challenges and opportunities that face organisations as they go through periods of change and transformation. This ranges from implementing and designing solutions to sitting on governance bodies. I feel this puts me in a good position to constructively contribute both to the specific IT aspects that have been identified as being required but also across all the committee's responsibilities.