

## **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 Mr Arron Ashton Professor Alice Brown Ms Manya Buchan Lady Joyce Caplan Ms Ann Cormack Ms Candice Donnelly Ms Frances Dow Sheriff Principal Alastair Dunlop (online) Ms Elisabeth Feldstein (online) Dr Mary Gunn (online)	Ms Kate Hawley Professor Stephen Hillier Ms Kirsty MacGregor (online) Professor Francis McManus Mr Jock Millican (online) Dr Bruce Nelson Professor Graeme Reid Mr Devin Scobie (online) Rt. Rev Brian Smith Ms Krystyna Szumelukowa 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 Convener 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 Seconder. 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 Seconder 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 style="text-align: center;"><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:

---

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

---

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

---

4 Present occupation:

---

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:

---

Signature of Seconder \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

---



## 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