

Court

Tue 13 February 2024, 13:00 - 16:00

Room D145 - Paisley Campus

A meeting of the University Court constituted under the University of the West of Scotland Order of Council 2019 will be held on Tuesday 13th February 2024 at 1pm in the Room D145 at the Paisley Campus. Lunch will be available from 12 noon.

Agenda

13:00 - 13:02 **1. Welcome/Apologies for Absence/Declaration of Interest**
2 min


13:02 - 13:05 **2. Minutes of Meeting held on 27th November 2023**
3 min
Decision
 CourtMins271123.pdf (5 pages)

13:05 - 13:06 **3. Matters Arising**
1 min

13:06 - 13:07 **4. Determination of Any Other Business**
1 min

13:07 - 13:12 **5. Chair's Statement**
5 min
Information
Oral Report

13:12 - 13:27 **6. Principal & Vice-Chancellor Report to Court**
15 min
Discussion
 6.1 - PVC Report.pdf (13 pages)

13:27 - 13:42 **7. Students' Union**
15 min
7.1. Students' Union Report
Information
 7.1 - Students Union Report.pdf (6 pages)

13:42 - 13:52 **8. Senate**
10 min
8.1. Report from Meeting of Senate held on 13th December 2023
Discussion

13:52 - 14:12 **9. Committee Reports**

20 min

9.1. Report from Meeting of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 17th January 2024

Information

9.1 - GNC report.pdf (3 pages)

9.2. Report from Meeting of Resources & People Committee held on 17th January 2024

Information

9.2 - RPC Report.pdf (4 pages)

9.2- Appendix - Health and Safety Dashboard.pdf (1 pages)

9.3. Report from Meeting of Audit & Risk Committee held on 23rd January 2024

Information

9.3 - ARC Report.pdf (5 pages)

14:12 - 14:32 **10. UWS Strategy & Performance**

20 min

Discussion

10.1. UWS Performance Report

10.1 - Performance Report.pdf (8 pages)

10.2. UWS Strategy 2030

Information

10.2 - Strategy 2030 Progress Report.pdf (3 pages)

14:32 - 15:15 **11. Strategic Presentation & Discussion Item**

43 min

11.1. Internationalisation at UWS

Discussion

15:15 - 15:16 **12. Any Other Business**

1 min

15:16 - 15:45 **13. Reserved Business**

29 min


13.1. Minutes from Reserved Meeting held on 27th November 2023

Decision

CourtReservedMins - 271123.pdf (1 pages)

13.2. Report from Meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 17th January 2024

Information

 13.2 - Reserved - RemCo Report.pdf (2 pages)

13.3. Appraisal of Chair of Court

Discussion

Paisley, 13th February 2024 being the 75th meeting of the Court of the University of the West of Scotland

Present:

Mrs K Allum (Chair)
Ms U Agbaraji
Professor S Carnicelli
Ms S Elufioye (via MS Teams)
Mr A Gubbay (via MS Teams)
Ms K Hedge
Mr R Jefferies
Ms M Kennedy
Dr D MacLean (via MS Teams)
Dr L Meredith
Mr A Miller
Professor J Miller
Ms A Mitchell
Mr J Mone
Mr C Morgan (via MS Teams)
Mr A Munro
Ms L Muazu (via MS Teams)
Mr K Murdoch (via MS Teams)
Ms R Paterson

In attendance:

Professor R Cragg
Mr A MacIver
Ms D McMillan
Ms F Morton
Ms S Pitticas
Professor M Radosavljevic
Mr M Ross
Mrs A Loudon

Observers:

Ms J Crombie
Ms R Jin
Ms V Krishna

Apologies for absence were received from Ms L Carroll, Mr R Doherty and Mr H Stolkin

No Declarations of Interest were notified.

1. **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed Professor R Cragg to her first meeting of Court following her appointment as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching & Student Success).

On behalf of Court the Chair thanked Professor N Morris for his commitment and support to the University during his interim appointment as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching & Student Success) and wished him well for the future.

2. **Minutes**

Subject to minor amendment, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th November 2023 were approved as a correct record.

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising other than those contained elsewhere in the agenda.

4. **Determination of Any Other Business**

No additional items of business had been notified.

5. **Chair's Statement**

The Chair confirmed she had concluded 1-1 meetings with all members of Court. Feedback from these meetings and the self-evaluation questionnaire completed by members would be incorporated into the annual review of the effectiveness of Court.

Members were reminded that the period of appointment to Court of Dr I McLellan, elected by the academic and research staff of the University, had concluded at the end of November 2023. Following a nomination and election process, Dr A M Craig, Head of Division of Adult Nursing, Community & Health has been elected academic staff governor on Court for a 3 year period with effect from 1st March 2024. On behalf of Court, the Chair thanked Dr McLellan for his commitment to the work of the Court during his period of appointment.

The Chair reminded members that the University had commissioned a portrait of Professor C Mahoney who had served as Principal & Vice-Chancellor from 2013 to 2021. An event to formally unveil the portrait would be held at the Lanarkshire Campus on 28th February 2024. Court was also reminded of the expectations around members' attendance at the University's forthcoming graduation ceremonies.

6. **Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Report**

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor spoke to the report which provided an update on issues facing HE and the University in Scotland, the UK and internationally.

He drew members' attention to the adverse impact of the draft Scottish Government budget on funding for HE and highlighted the outcome of a recent UK-wide review of funding for HE which had confirmed the difficult and challenging fiscal position facing Scotland's Universities in comparison to other parts of the UK. In particular it was noted that Universities in Scotland received 23% lower unit of funding per student than universities in England.

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor reminded members that the budget approved by Court in June had been predicated on increased international student recruitment. However, international student recruitment had been impacted by lower demand across the HE sector and sector reporting suggested a changing perception of the UK from international students with other competitor nations appearing more welcoming, combined with greater consistency in immigration policies.

Although international student intakes at UWS for Term 1 and Term 2 were below the approved target, they remained in line with 2022/2023 student levels but did not reflect the anticipated growth. The University continued to work closely with international agents and London partners to maximise student conversion from applications for the Term 3 intake.

In response to a question, the Vice Principal (Finance & Infrastructure) confirmed that although financial reporting capability was currently limited, the Finance Team continued to work closely with School and Departments to ensure that appropriate measures were being taken to monitor expenditure and control costs. Communication with staff on funding implications was vital and this was a standing item at All Staff Meetings, in monthly core briefs and within individual departmental meetings hosted by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor. It was recognised that despite the ongoing communication plans, there continues to be some unease amongst staff as to the potential consequences of a reduced income level.

The reduction in applications for controlled programmes, particularly for Education programmes, was noted. Members discussed the potential reasons for this and the range of initiatives ongoing at UWS to creatively respond to these challenges many of which were outwith the University's control.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

7. **Students Union**

The President of the Students' Union spoke to the report which provided an update on recent activities at the UWS Union.

She drew members' attention in particular to the diverse range of societies in operation highlighting the positive impact on the student experience including support for student loneliness and mental health. Although the commercial venues at Ayr and Pasley had been closed, the Union continued to explore opportunities to drive student engagement including off campus activity and to work closely with the University to generate income.

The increased demand on the Advice Service and particularly for students seeking hardship grants was noted. Court noted that advice and hardship funding was also available for students from the Funding Team at the University.

The ongoing financial challenges affecting the Union were noted. An updated budget forecast for the remainder of the financial year would be included in the report to the next meeting.

In line with the Code of Practice between the University and the Students' Union a copy of the Associations' Financial Statements for year ended 31st July 2023 had been published for the information of Court on the Board Portal.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

8. **Senate**

8.1 **Report from Meeting of Senate held on 13th December 2023**

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor spoke to the report from the meeting of Senate held on 13th December highlighting the positive debate on a number of academic issues, particularly the work of the Retention Task Force and Early Intervention Team in the Student Success Directorate.

Court noted that the Curriculum Framework had been revised to address the April 2023 Learning and Teaching Principles aligned with the revised approach to ASPIRE (Academic, Professional & Personal Development Modules). A full consultation on Learning & Teaching/Curriculum Framework would be undertaken shortly, led by the new Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching & Student Success). This would inform the development of UWS Strategy 2030 and would include robust consultation and engagement with students and staff.

Members of Court were reminded of the opportunity to attend meetings of Senate as observers.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

9. **Committee Reports**

9.1 Report from meeting of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 17th January 2024

Court noted and endorsed the key principle proposed by the Committee that the role of Chair of the Remuneration Committee would be aligned to the role of Vice Chair of Court and the role of Intermediary Member of Court would be aligned to the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

As the Chair of the Remuneration Committee had stood down from Court at the conclusion of his period of appointment on 31st January 2024, the Committee had considered the appointment of a new Chair of the Remuneration Committee. To ensure continuity in appointment, by Chair's action, the Vice Chair of Court had been appointed Chair of the Remuneration Committee and Mr H Stolkin appointed to membership of the Remuneration Committee with effect from 1st February 2024.

9.2 Report from meeting of Resources & People Committee held on 17th January 2024

Court noted for information the report from the meeting of the Resources & People Committee held on 17th January 2024.

9.3 Report from Meeting of Audit & Risk Committee held on 23rd January 2024

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee spoke to the report from the meeting held on 23rd January 2024.

Court agreed that was imperative that a robust system of financial control be maintained and welcomed the progress now being made to build a "minimum viable product" version of the finance system which had been destroyed by the cyber-attack. This would enable the recording of all 2023-2024 year to date financial transactions, the reinstatement of monthly management reporting and budgetary controls, and the development of the 2024-2025 budget.

Although the cash position remained strong, challenges particularly with student recruitment combined with unbudgeted costs of recovery from the cyber-attack had resulted in a net adverse impact on the financial forecasts for 2023/2024.

Work had now commenced on the external audit and it was planned that the Financial Statements for year ended 31st July 2023 would be available for consideration and approval by Court at its next meeting.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

10 **UWS Strategy & Performance**

10.1 Performance Report

Court noted for information the report which provided an update against a subset of performance indicators as at 1st February 2024.

10.2 UWS Strategy 2030

The Vice Principal (Planning & Recruitment) spoke to the report which provided an update on progress with development of UWS Strategy 2030.

He drew members' attention to the timeline for developing the new Strategy highlighting in particular the proposed sessions and focus of discussion at the forthcoming Court Strategic Residential Event in April.

Court welcomed the ongoing staff and student consultation activity in relation to the new Strategy and was interested to note the range of outputs and themes which were coming forward.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

11 **Strategic Presentation & Discussion Item**

The Vice Principal (Internationalisation) made a presentation to Court on the importance of Transnational Education (TNE), benefits for staff and students, curriculum developments and the opportunities for influencing UWS Strategy 2030 through an international lens.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal (Internationalisation) for her interesting and informative presentation and the discussion which had followed.

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