

# University Court

Wed 21 September 2022, 14:00 - 17:00

In person and by VC (MS Teams)

## Attendees

### Board members

Alastair MacColl (Chair), Andrea Robertson, Angus Campbell, Calum Ross, David Sandison, Duncan Macaulay, Fiona McLean, Heather Innes, Madeleine Anne Rose Brown, Mei-Li Roberts, Murray Easton, Poonam Malik, Rosemary McCormack, Sara O'Hagan

Absent: Malcolm Burr, Beverly Clubley, Linda Kirkland, Jo de Sylva, Brian Crichton

### In attendance

Sheena Stewart, Jen Vanderhoven, Lorna Walker, Neil Simco, Niall McArthur, Nicholas Oakley, Roger Sendall, Vicki Nairn, Aaron Porter (Observer)

Absent: Gary Campbell

## Meeting minutes

### 1. \*CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS/OPENING ADDRESS

Verbal

Alastair MacColl

#### 1.1. \*Apologies/Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the members.

Apologies were recorded from Malcolm Burr, Beverly Clubley, Linda Kirkland, Jo De Sylva, Brian Crichton, and Prof Gary Campbell.

Verbal

Alastair MacColl

#### 1.2. \*Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

The Chair asked all the attendees present other than the University Secretary and Chief People Officer, to leave the meeting for an in-camera members-only session on the reserved business item.

Verbal

#### 1.3. \*UHI Leadership Proposal [In camera]

[RESERVED BUSINESS]

#### 1.4. \*Strategic Session

[Attendees and observer rejoin the meeting]

The Chair welcomed Aaron Porter, of AdvanceHE, to the meeting as a board observer.

Court held a strategic session on the university's 5–10-year vision and the UHI 2024 transformation plan.

Court discussed and **agreed** a vision statement. It was agreed that this would be largely for internal use. It was anticipated that the UHI 2024 Workstream charged with recommending a 5-10 year strategy to Court would produce an external facing statement.

Court **noted** and **endorsed** the seven workstreams that comprise the UHI 2024 programme and the communication process planned to support the roll out of UHI2024.

Court members were asked to consider aligning themselves to the workstreams or to participate in either a workstream or the task and finish group.

It was suggested that in the roll out the strategy and EO work streams be prioritised and that all of the workstream leads be encouraged to make the big decision promptly, thereby releasing the benefits of the change process at the earliest opportunity.

Another update on progress will be given at the next Court meeting and it is anticipated that a full business/implementation plan will be ready before the end of the calendar year with delivery beginning on or before Jan1.

### 1.5. \*Review of Any Delegated Decisions

Verbal

Court **noted** the delegated decision to approve the appointment of an interim Chair at UHI Perth College. A process to appoint a permanent chair would proceed with the involvement of University Court.

### 1.6. \*Starring

A member requested that item 7.3.2 Academic Partner Agreements be added for starred discussion.

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## 2. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

### 2.1. \*Approval of the minutes of 15 June 2022

Approve

Alastair MacColl

Court **approved** the minutes of the 15 June 2022 meeting as an accurate record.

 UC22-23-044 Minutes\_University Court\_150622.pdf

 UC22-23-044 Minutes\_Court - Reserved Business\_150622-1.pdf

### 2.2. \*Approval of minutes of 22 August 2022

Note

Alastair MacColl

Court **approved** the minutes of the 22 August 2022 meeting as an accurate record.

 UC22-23-045 Minutes\_University Court\_220822.pdf

### 2.3. \*Matters Arising

Note

Alastair MacColl

Court **noted** the matters arising. The Secretary reported that the Regional Strategy Committee have endorsed the proposed reformulation of that Committee into the new committee entitled Partnership Forum.

 UC22-23-046 Court 21 September Matters Arising.pdf

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## 3. \*VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Note

Court **noted** without further discussion.

 UC22-23-047 PVC Report to Court 21 September.pdf

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## 4. \*HISA REPORT

Note

Heather Innes

Court **noted** without further discussion.

 UC22-23-048 HISA Update UHI Court Sept.pdf

## 5. \*Items for discussion (strategic short-to-medium initiatives)

Vicki Nairn, Vice Principal Operations, opened the discussion on the Executive Office (EO) sustainability plan. She reported the EO deficit reduction plan over a three-year timescale had been agreed with the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its most recent meeting. Priority actions arising from this plan included salary cost reduction, primarily via a voluntary severance scheme (VSS); establishment control; an education portfolio review; procurement review; and asset/ estate management review. She also reported plans for commercial and philanthropic income, and diversification of income streams.

In response to questions on the VSS, Vicki Nairn and other senior executives reported that:

- The VSS would be integrated with the UHI2024 workstreams and cognisant of the university's skills portfolio and workforce requirements.
- A review of the terms of the scheme was underway to ensure appropriate uptake, and a budget identified to finance the scheme to make it as attractive.
- That the VSS savings target would be refined as other deficit reduction initiatives were developed and implemented.
- That communications with EO and partnership staff would be developed to ensure clarity of purpose of the VSS (and other deficit reduction measures).
- That VSS governance protocols had been agreed with FGPC based on audit findings following a previous scheme. Following discussion on this matter, it was agreed that the Remuneration Committee would provide oversight of the process run by an executive panel. Declarations of interest would also be carefully managed.

The Court **approved** the EO financial sustainability plan as presented.

### 5.1. \*Engagement and Philanthropy

Dr Jen Vanderhoven, Vice Principal Engagement, introduced the engagement and philanthropy item. She shared feedback from recent stakeholder engagement sessions, with findings suggesting that stakeholders are keen for the university to take a leadership role in the region and community and to deliver on the 'daring to be different' campaign. She reported on both the 'Together' campaign – a five-year engagement campaign to demonstrate the University's principles and impact; to build stakeholder engagement, and to secure philanthropic support for the university's strategic initiatives of £30m by 2030. As part of this she also reported on the "Friends of UHI" campaign to raise the reputation of UHI via a group of UHI ambassadors and invited Court members to join.

Court welcomed the initiatives and aims of the campaigns and **noted** the update.

 UC22-23-049 UHI Engagement Strategy Court 210922.pdf

**Discussion**

Jen Vanderhoven

### 5.2. \*Tertiary re-organisation

Prof Neil Simco introduced the paper on academic restructuring. He outlined the aims of the restructure, which sought to lessen duplication of academic activity, particularly in decision-making; enhance strategic working; facilitate the closer integration of research and teaching where appropriate; and generate a strong and integrated academic community with a sense of identity and pride, and be simple, coherent and clear to both staff and external audiences. It was anticipated that it could also secure significant financial savings in regard to staff costs of at least £300K per annum. Members requested that the proposals be aligned with the UHI2024 workstreams, noted the report, and requested updates at future Court meetings.

 UC22-23-050 Academic Restructuring.pdf

**Discussion**

Neil Simco

### 5.3. \*Internationalisation

In the absence of the paper's author, the Vice Principal Students, the Court **agreed** to postpone this item until the next meeting.

Action: Internationalisation paper to return to next Court meeting.

 UC22-23-051 Internationalisation Court.pdf

**Discussion**

Gary Campbell

## 6. \*Items for approval/endorsement

### 6.1. \*Annual report to SFC on Institution-Led Review

Court **approved** the paper without further discussion.

 UC22-23-052 SFC annual report AY21-22 v2.pdf

**Approve**

Neil Simco

## 6.2. \*Collaborative Opportunity

In the absence of the paper's author, the Vice Principal Students, the Court **agreed** to postpone this item until the next meeting. It was noted that interim discussion might take place with members of the executive and the Court if there were any time-sensitive constraints.

Action: Collaborative Opportunity paper to return to next Court meeting.

 UC22-23-053 Collaborative Opportunity.pdf

**Approve**  
Gary Campbell

## 6.3. \*Nominations Committee recommendation

Court **approved** the Nominations Committee recommendations without further discussion.

 UC22-23-054 Nom Com proposal Sep 2022.pdf

**Approve**  
Sheena Stewart

## 7. Items for noting

### 7.1. Minutes from Committees of Court

The University Secretary reported that the remuneration committee minutes were awaiting final sign off and would be presented to the next meeting.

**Information**

#### 7.1.1. - Audit Committee

**Noted** without further discussion.

 UC22-23-055 Minutes\_Audit Committee\_250822.pdf

**Note**  
Angus Campbell

#### 7.1.2. - Finance & General Purposes Committee

**Noted** without further discussion.

 UC22-23-056 220908 DRAFT FGPC Minutes.pdf

 UC22-23-056 Minutes\_University of the Highlands and Islands\_130922.pdf

**Note**  
Andrea Robertson

#### 7.1.3. - Regional Strategy Committee

**Noted** without further discussion.

 UC22-23-057 Minutes\_Regional Strategy Committee (RSC)\_140922.pdf

**Note**  
Alastair MacColl

#### 7.1.4. - Academic Council

**Noted** without further discussion.

 UC22-23-058 Academic Council draft minutes 090622.pdf

**Note**  
Neil Simco

#### 7.1.5. - Nominations Committee

**Noted** without further discussion.

 UC22-23-059 Minutes\_Nominations Committee\_090822\_Redacted.pdf

**Note**  
Andrea Robertson

### 7.2. Student Numbers Report

**Noted** without further discussion.

 UC22-23-060 Student Numbers report.pdf

**Note**  
Gary Campbell

### 7.3. Academic Partner Updates

### 7.3.1. - College Merger Update

Court **noted** the update. The Secretary reported that a letter of endorsement will be required from Court that falls between meetings, and that this would be picked up under Chair's action.

[UC22-23-061 RICM Merger Business Case Update.pdf](#)

**Note**  
Rachel Cumberland

### 7.3.2. - Agreements Update

Roger Sendall, Director of Governance, reported on the academic agreements. He reported on progress to date and that, whilst some partners were willing to sign, some have requested more time for Board consultation, and others felt that signing would be premature considering organizational changes proposed in the UHI2024 initiative. He closed by noting that the agreements contained a built-in review process and that the partners and partnership were exposed to risk without up-to-date agreements in place.

Court **noted** the update.

[UC22-23-062 Court New AP Agreements Update 092022.pdf](#)

**Note**  
Roger Sendall

### 7.3.3. - Financial Monitoring Reports

Vicki Nairn, Vice Principal Operations, reported that EO was working closely with UHI Shetland and SFC on deficit funding as reported in the paper.

Court **noted** the update and the financial monitoring reports.

[UC22-23-063 Financial Monitoring reports.pdf](#)

**Note**  
Niall McArthur

### 7.3.4. - Change to assigned college boards

**Noted** without further discussion.

[UC22-23-064 Appointments to Assigned Incorporated College Boards.pdf](#)

**Note**  
Roger Sendall

### 7.4. - Quarterly Status Reports

**Noted** without further discussion.

[UC22-23-065 September 2022 Academic Partner Status Reports.pdf](#)

**Note**  
Sheena Stewart

### 7.5. UHI Zero Update

Court discussed the UHI Zero update and the suggested investment indicated in the paper for enabling the university to reach carbon net zero by 2030. Dr Jen Vanderhoven, Vice Principal Engagement, reported that this was an indicative figure and was not yet costed into budgets, and was likely to be a similar issue for most organisations, but that the university must continue its efforts in this area. Court **noted** the update.

[UC22-23-066 UHI Zero Court 210922.pdf](#)

**Note**  
Jen Vanderhoven

### 7.6. Risk Management Report & High-Level Risk Register

Court **noted** the risk management report.

[UC22-23-067 Court Risk Report 092022.pdf](#)

**Note**  
Roger Sendall

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## 8. \*ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair reported that he would work with the University Secretary to appoint another Chair of an Academic Partner to the Court to replace the UHI Perth Chair whose position as a Court member ends on 30 September 2022.

There was no other business and the Chair closed the meeting at 15:50.

**Discussion**  
All

