



General Council Meeting of 18 June 2016: Annex to Billet

THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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Papers for the General Council Meeting on 18 June 2016

1 Formal communications from the University Court

The following Draft Resolutions have been received:

- 5/2016 Foundation of a Chair of Cultural Relations
- 6/2016 Foundation of a Chair of Medical Bioinformatics
- 7/2016 Foundation of a Chair of Statistics
- 8/2016 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Translational Medicine
- 9/2016 Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations
- 10/2016 Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations
- 11/2016 Higher Degree Programme Regulations
- 12/2016 Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

2 Report of the Academic Standing Committee

for the General Council meeting on 18 June 2016

Convener of the Academic Standing Committee: Professor Stuart Macpherson

Since my last report the Committee has held one meeting. On Wednesday 13 April we had a very informed and comprehensive presentation from and discussion with Professor Jane Norman, Vice-Principal People and Culture. Professor Norman gave a review of equality issues within the University. As usual the Committee were impressed with the commitment to extensive preparation, high quality presentation and willingness to enter into discussion demonstrated by very senior members of staff.

The first of four topics covered gender matters. 62% of undergraduate entrants were female and women were proportionately over-represented in Health and Social Science, Medicine and Literatures, Languages and Cultures but under-represented in the Schools of Engineering and Informatics. Women also performed better in their undergraduate degree course and were more likely to achieve a 1st or 2:1. As far as staff were concerned women were under-represented at the higher grades and 23% of the professoriat in Edinburgh are female. The Committee was interested to hear of the concept of Unconscious Bias and to know that the University had an on-line training module on the subject. Members suggested that this might be considered compulsory training for anyone involved in student selection or employment interviewing.

The next topic discussed was Mental Health Services. Students are experiencing increasing levels of stress and the demand for appointments at the Student Counselling Service are increasing. The University has undertaken a review of mental health services which is yet to formally report. However there is a bid in the current planning round for resources to increase the provision and speed of response of the Counselling Service.

At the Principal's request Professor Norman is conducting a review of the support provided to students with disability. It is disappointing that only 45% of recommended academic adjustments were currently enacted. However efforts were being made to mainstream modifications such as lecturers always using a microphone and undergraduates receiving slides 24 hours prior to a lecture. There continued to be challenges in providing disability access to all areas of the campus, in large part due to the extensive number of heritage buildings. As these are remodelled disability access should be improved.

Professor Norman concluded with comments on sexual harassment and the Committee was pleased to hear that the University was supporting a EUSA campaign to educate and inform staff and students on issues in this area.

3 Report of the Constitutional Standing Committee

for the General Council meeting on 18 June 2016

Convener of the Constitutional Standing Committee: Mr Gordon Cairns

The Committee has met on one occasion since my last report having been tasked at the beginning of this term with the continued monitoring of the progress of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill.

The Scottish Government Response to the Education and Culture Committee Stage 1 report has now been published and the Bill then finalised and approved. Our committee met to consider its terms and reported our findings to the Business Committee at its meeting in early May.

The updating of the information provided to those members of the General Council considering nomination to the Business Committee has been completed and thanks to the invaluable assistance and guidance provided to us by our secretary Mike Mitchell.

Following my recent appointment as vice convener elect of the Business Committee I must record my personal thanks to all members past and present of the committee as also to Mike, Alison and again to recently retired Mary Scott for their generous support, understanding and assistance to me over the years of my convenorship of the Constitutional Standing Committee.

4 Report of the Finance and Services Standing Committee

for the General Council meeting on 18 June 2016

Convener of the Finance and Services Standing Committee: Sir Philip Mawer

The Committee has met twice since the General Council meeting on 13 February 2016. A further meeting is planned for 25 May (after the closing date for material for this edition of the Annex to The Billet) when it will meet the University's Director of HR Services.

22 March: Information and Library Services

The focus of this meeting was a presentation by Mr Gavin McLachlan, Director of Information and Library Services, in which he provided an exciting prospect of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the future development of the University's IT and IS systems. Mr McLachlan outlined the long term strategic vision for the Information Services Group, which covered three main sections:

- The Student Experience
- Research and Innovation
- Service and Excellence.

The provision of effective Information Services (IS) is crucial to the student and academic experience at Edinburgh and to the provision of support services throughout the university. Whilst Edinburgh has many advantages – such as the second largest university heritage collection in the UK; advanced technology; and world-leading experience in the provision of online digital education – there is a need not only to invest more in updating core systems but to plan the development of Information Systems and Services on a

coordinated long term basis. This has led to the development of four plans which over the next decade will drive the enhancement and delivery of Information Services throughout the university.

Discussion with Mr McLachlan covered among other matters:

- The need to improve the level of investment by the University in this area.
- The challenge of recruiting good people from diverse backgrounds, even in a region as large as greater Edinburgh.
- The training required to assist and ensure maximum benefit from the process of digital transformation which the ambitious plans envisaged.
- The importance of a thorough approach to ensuring digital security.

27 April: Estates and Buildings

At this meeting, Mr Gary Jebb, Director of Estates and Buildings, offered a similarly encouraging prospect for the future development of the University's built estate. The University had gradually acquired the second largest estate of any UK university. The upkeep and development of this presented a challenge of considerable size and complexity. The University had recognised the need for action if it was to maintain its world class status and had committed to invest more than ever before with an expectation of some £150 million a year in improvements over the next ten years.

Whereas previous investment had been in some areas piecemeal, the aim was to develop the University's five 'campuses' or clusters of buildings in a more coordinated way. For example, the central area was envisaged as forming a University Quarter embedded in the City. Kings Buildings would see a major upgrade with the objective of creating, arguably for the first time, a campus that worked as a coherent whole. Points identified in conversation with Mr Jebb included:

- The burden and the opportunities provided by the University's heritage buildings, not least Old College.
- The importance of consistent, imaginative signage in creating the sense of the presence in the City of a world class university.
- The value of continued close and mutually supportive working with the City Council and the Scottish Government if their aspirations as well as those of the University were to be fully realised.

The striking and encouraging similarity between the presentations by Mr McLachlan and Mr Jebb was the sense that the University has a clear vision for its development in each of these key areas, along with comprehensive plans for delivering the vision and a commitment to do so. The Committee will be keen to support and monitor progress as the plans unfold.

5 Report of the Public Affairs Standing Committee

for the General Council Meeting on 18 June 2016

Convener of the Public Affairs Standing Committee: Mr Matthew McPherson

For those who attended at the University of Edinburgh, Bristo Square will in the minds of many as the heart of university life. Teviot and the McEwan Hall stand shoulder to shoulder; their dramatic presence a symbol of all that is the best about our University. I am pleased to say that hasn't changed, though Bristo Square's role has perhaps been temporarily suspended to allow for its multi-million pound regeneration. I don't imagine that many people reading this will be skateboarding or parkour enthusiasts, but if you are, the closure of Bristo Square will be of the upmost inconvenience! The transformation of Bristo Square is a

positive change which we will soon all be able to see and enjoy, but it too stands as a symbol of the many other thoughtful and impressive investments the University is making.

Over the past year the Public Affairs Standing Committee (PASC) has played a major role in investing in the General Council's future as well as our University's.

The diversity of students recruited to the University has increased exponentially over the past decade. Whilst this has presented opportunities for the institution and the many thousands of people who attend here, it increases the challenge of how we continue to communicate with those people once they graduate. PASC believes that there are two key reasons our communication is important. Firstly, graduates benefit from having a strong and meaningful relationship with their University. Secondly, the essential work of the General Council (GC) will only continue if graduates are aware of the importance of its role. PASC recently passed its paper at GC Business Committee meeting which set the agenda for a renewed and new focus on the importance of maintaining that relationship.

The members of PASC continue to have direct input into the work of a growing and increasingly ambitious Development and Alumni department, which itself has reinvigorated the University's communication work. This partnership has been invaluable in helping to promote and maintain the GC's work, including the development of the Alumni Weekend and our upcoming meeting in London in the summer of 2016. The GC proposes to become one of the University's 'arms of engagement' in its Alumni Engagement strategy, and the GC will benefit directly from being more prominent in University publications - one of the many ideas to come out of PASC.

Contributing to the work of the GC is an opportunity for all graduates, and the work of PASC over the past year has been on looking at how that can best be done. Keeping members more up to date with the role of the GC through a new leaflet and joint publication with the University; empowering the contribution of members through a more accessible website which will welcome views; and supporting those who seek to stand for election to the GC; have been some of the notable achievements of PASC's work.

Should you have any specific questions, or wish to contribute further to the work of PASC, please do not hesitate to contact me.

6 Meetings of the Business Committee

The Committee has met twice since its last Report was printed, viz. 18 February and 5 May 2016.

Papers from the General Council Meeting on 13 February 2016

A Presentation of the Annual Report of the University

at the General Council Meeting on 13 February 2016

Principal and Vice-Chancellor: Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea

Principal: So, Rector, members of the General Council: it's a tremendous pleasure to give this report; this is the 14th time I've made this report which, as you know, is specified in the 1858 act and it was repeated in the 1889 act, so I have a legal duty to account to you for how the university has been going in the last year and I have a legal obligation to listen to, and respond to, any questions or comments that you have. I want

to start by thanking the General Council. It was extremely effective at lobbying. It was very noticeable in the debate about the Scottish Government's Higher Education Governance Bill that the voice of the General Council of Edinburgh was heard very loudly and also the voice of the General Council of the University of St Andrews; that was extremely important. It was a very ineptly drafted bill. One highlight was that the bill specified, and this was supposed to be an improvement in accountabilities to stakeholders, that two alumni should be elected to be on the governing body. And you, of course, will all know that since 1858 three General Council Assessors have been on the University of Edinburgh Court so, quite extraordinary. And it would actually, if it had been passed as originally drafted, forced the university to actually be less accountable to the General Council than it currently is, so, quite extraordinary. There also was a very inept thing about our Senate, but the lobbying was successful in quite a number of regards, including that one. So I really appreciate that activity. I appreciate Professor Swainson's work as Convener of the Business Committee, a lot of very good contributions to the university, and Mike Mitchell's work as Secretary of the General Council, and the three Court Assessors continue to make a really vital contribution to the work of governing the university. So, I appreciate that. I also like having the company when we need to process up the High Street, in the rain, on a Sunday, to magnificent ceremonies in St Giles. It is very noticeable that one sees more representation from the General Council than one does from the staff. I think you set a very good public position there. And can I add my thanks to Mary Scott for the great work she has done in keeping things running smoothly.

Before I start my presentation I do want to say that I am delighted that we are in this new location. This, obviously, is an historic building. It served as the Infirmary and Lister walked the corridors and invented antiseptics here. It served as the High School and Walter Scott studied here. We turned it into an awful mess in the 20th century and it was just a higgledy piggledy set of low ceilinged rabbit warrens, and I think one of the great joys of our building programme in the university has been the way that we have addressed some of these legacy buildings. This is obviously an incredibly important legacy building with a wonderful regency frontage. It is actually a pair of buildings and the place in the middle with the wonderful top lid is the courtyard between two buildings, two old buildings that have been beautifully combined. And they've got the highest BREEAM rating which is very appropriate for the Centre for Carbon Innovation; that is to say they have the highest rating with regard to insulation, loss of heat and use of power that it is possible for a building to have despite being essentially a pair of Georgian buildings. So we're very proud of it. The building programme was mentioned. For the last number of years we have been spending about 75 million pounds a year, which can be conceptualised each year as a 50 million pound new building, two 10 million pound refurbishments and 5 million pounds worth of tidying up. And we're about to double that activity, so we will move from spending about 75 million a year on the estate to about 130 million. That's proof of the health of the university. If you go out to Easter Bush you'll see the wonderful pair of buildings, the Roslin and the Vet school, together about 100 million pounds worth of glorious new build. If you go along the Cowgate towards, as it were, the back route to the Parliament, towards Moray House, you'll see 120 million pounds worth of quite beautiful postgraduate accommodation. I do encourage you to go and look. You'll see the largest student kitchen and more than 1000 students there share a single kitchen that has been beautifully fitted with wonderful cooking stations and with... to my amazement, we supplied cooking pots and everything and absolutely gorgeous furniture. Most of us would instantly give that kitchen furniture house room ourselves. But it is a very nice facility. It is a wonderful combination of refurbishments like this and so many buildings around George Square, and exciting new builds.

On to my presentation then. If you look by College at the University we have 35,000 students. We have, since 2002, been growing a rate of about, a little bit more, about 1000 students a year in student population. We were about 21000+ then; we're now 35,000. 61% are in humanities and social sciences, so that's the big part. That would be big for a British university on its own so that is large, mostly centred around George Square. 24% in Science and Engineering and 15% in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. And that is a very big medical school, a medical school with 5.5 thousand students in. By any world standards... that is one of the biggest that you've got. So we're very substantial.

In terms of level of study, for a university that's consistently in the World top 25, we are odd. We have 23,000 undergraduates. So you instantly see that almost 2/3 of the student body is undergraduates. Because the international reputation is so driven by research, most of the major research universities might be 50% postgraduate, they might be even more. So we're a bit interesting in that regard, in that we have such a high proportion of undergraduates. And we have a very healthy number of students doing doctorates. I've been holding receptions for first year students doing doctorates, and we have 5000 of those, these are very important students. They are the academic future, they come to us from all over the world. Once they've got their doctorates they will take up positions in industry, in other universities, and they will be the network that, 10 or 15 years from now, my future colleagues will be working with. So those 5000 students working towards a PhD; they are an immensely important asset for the university and obviously they need nurtured. Where do the students come from? Well, as you can see, about a third come from Scotland. Sometimes people say "Oh my Gosh, the University of Edinburgh isn't as Scottish as it was" and in some percentage sense that's true, but are there more Scottish students here than when you were a student? Yes. The number of Scottish students rises every year, it is now more than 12000 and, for some of you, there weren't 12,000 students in the whole university when you were students here. So we have a lot of Scottish students: 12,000. We have 10,000 students from outside the EU. We have a lot of English, Welsh and Northern Irish students, 8000, and then we have a respectable, almost 4 and a half thousand, from the other parts of the European Union. Where do the students come from? Well, very recently it used to be that the United States of America was the big cohort. It's been overtaken by the People's Republic of China. That is interesting, obviously, the People's Republic of China is much bigger in population terms than the United States; it's four times bigger and obviously it's got an economy which until very recently was booming. It's still got an economy with a growth rate that we would die for. And so we have, from the People's Republic of China, got 2400 students and almost 2400 students from the United States of America. The figure for the United States of America is interesting to me. That seems quite a lot as you can instantly work out: that's around 6% of the student body. Any guesses, when Principal Robertson during the Enlightenment, 1780s, what percentage of our students came from the United States then? And here is an incentive: if somebody gets within 2% there's a pint of claret for you. No, you need to put your hand up. Any guesses? What was the percentage of students from the United States in 1780?

An audience member: 5%?

Principal: 5%? Any other guesses?

Audience member: 3

Principal: 3? 10? Well done. Exactly right. There were 10%. They were nearly all studying medicine, some were studying divinity because they wanted to be Presbyterian ministers. But, when people say "gosh you got a lot of US students", well, in the 1780s, 10% were our students. And they came - why did they come here? - they came here because Thomas Jefferson said this was the best university in the world. If you were a US family that had a son who wanted to go to medical school and you could afford it, you wouldn't mess about with the north east of the US, you'd send them to the best university in the world which was, of course, Edinburgh.

And then we see Germany really strong. Germany is interesting. Any ideas which school the biggest subsection of these German students are going to? Law? That's right Law. And you notice that if you walk around Law and you say to them "why are you here because we don't teach German Law" and they say "oh but I'm interested in International Law". We have a very strong reputation in Germany for Law. Obviously Canada, Hong Kong, is there very strong indeed. Singapore is strong and Taiwan doesn't make it onto this list. But if you move from China to students whose first language is Mandarin or Cantonese, then you're up to about 3500 in our community. Very strong with Malaysia. Any idea why that Malaysian number is really quite high, if you think about it. Why is that Malaysian number so high? Anybody know? If you get a postgraduate place at the University of Edinburgh from Malaysia, because our standing is so high, the

Malaysian government pays your fees and costs. So, if you're sitting in Kuala Lumpur wondering where to apply to, then - you obviously have to trade that against the weather - but it will come as a free good. Likewise Norway is not a very big country, historically (it's changed now sadly) but it used to be the case that if you're Norwegian and you got a place at the University of Edinburgh, again, because of our status, the Norwegian government would cover all your costs. Sadly it doesn't do that anymore. But it's a very interesting pattern. Interesting to see Greece so strong, not a really big population country. And to see Lithuania there. I mean I'm particularly interested myself in smallish countries that send a lot of students here. Quite often there are different stories into that. So that's where they're coming from.

So here's the bad news: if you were applying now you wouldn't all get in. Sorry about that but we had almost 60,000 applications and we let slightly more than 6,000 in. Nearly every one of those 60,000 applications was, in the jargon, competent. That is to say they had the higher or the 'A' level grades necessary to get in. So it wasn't that we had 20 or 30 thousand people apply who weren't equipped to study at the University of Edinburgh. We had 60,000 applied who, pretty much, were all equipped to study and obviously we went for the most deserving 6,000 of those. And what I'm doing, if you've got the annual report is, I'm going through it backwards, so starting with the numbers and things at the back and then going to the highlights. Lots of personal chairs in the Humanities and Social Sciences; some very important Professorships. Really pleased that David Finkelstein has joined us to take charge of the Centre for Open Learning. Very pleased that we've got a Chair of Digital Learning in Judy Robertson, and obviously the Grierson Chair. Vital and - gosh - I mean, Professor Jacobsen could do well if he could explain to us what the financial markets are up to. When the Queen went to visit the London School of Economics - I think in about 2009 - she said to the collected professors of economics there "well why didn't you tell us what was going to happen?" And a lot of very important Honorary Professorships in there and very important Personal Chairs in medicine and veterinary medicine: two in the area of gynaecology. Our link to the city is manifested in different way, but one of the ways its manifest is that the city overruled the grumpy professors of medicine in the 19th century and insisted that the university get into women's medicine. So against the opposition, imagine that eh, conservative medical professors, fancy that! But the city, particularly because of issues in childbirth, insisted that the university appoint a professor in that area and the second professor, obviously, was Simpson, who was not interested in anaesthetics. His interest to start with was much more focussed. He was interested in reducing pain during childbirth. That was his starting position. It took something like, Charles will know exactly, but it took more than 30 years before the anaesthetics that were successfully used to reduce pain in childbirth was used for things like reducing pain while your leg was being sawn off on the battlefield. It wasn't felt appropriate to use it for military surgery.

Some very important Professorships, interesting to see where we're going. Chair of Tropical Livestock; absolutely key area. Chair of the Molecular Pathology of Cancer. Very important Honorary Professorships, and then in science and engineering. And these are, for me, very interesting because it tells you where the university's going. So if you look at this list here you see a Chair of Higher Education Learning Context. Professor Rigby has now left us to be deputy Vice -Chancellor at Hull. Not called Hull anymore, it's called Lincoln. You see Chair in the Mathematics of Software Engineering. And if you look at the established chairs, Chair of Technology Enhanced Science Education... another chair... four Chairs of Technology Enhanced Science Education. And in fact each of these seven schools of the College of Science and Engineering now has a Chair in this areas. We've got some extraordinary powerful people, the one I'm most delighted with on that list is Jonathan Silvertown, very famous biologist. He's introduced a piece of software called iSpot which is used around the world and was used, for example, by a young eight year old girl to successfully identify a moth that had never been seen in the United Kingdom before. But it is software that is used worldwide. He held a Chair with great distinction at the Open University. And we basically had a sort of tussle of love between biology and geosciences. So he was given a joint Chair between the two schools as he arrived. So we're recruiting some very good people and some very nice Honorary Professorships. A lot of international acclaim. EUSA teaching awards, very important, the students' evaluation and their competition. And nomination for these awards and success taken immensely seriously by the academic staff. Chancellor's awards, really some key folk there, Elizabeth

Bomberg was wonderful teaching, Margaret [Frame] was tremendous working in oncology and Nicolas Mills with his wonderful work in the area of heart disease. Also we give awards for people who have done things for the student community. I would encourage you to re-read in greater detail. I'm very proud of the Annual Review. Ian Conn and his colleagues in Communication and Marketing work very hard to produce a good one. It is easily our best document. And then Sarah Keer-Keer won the Tam Dalyell award for engaging in popular science; a key area for us. We're coming up to the Science Festival, the university has a tremendous presence there. Very pleased that we had appropriate honours associated with the university in the Queens New Year's Honours and in the Birthday Honours.

Fabulous set of honorary graduates and very international – I particularly point out to you Gordon Aikman – who is somebody with very obvious motor neuron disease himself, working from a wheelchair organising others and just having a tremendous impact, not just in Scotland and the UK but worldwide in terms of support for those with MND. And Luke Dowdney, really inspiring person Luke, he got a degree in anthropology for us. He did his research, as anthropologists typically go abroad to demanding places, Luke went somewhere very demanding: he worked in the favela in the big slum in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. He was working with young people. He noticed that many of the young men he was working with during the course of his degree were killed because they were sent off to buy drugs by one gang, seen on the street by another gang and they would be shot. And that really distressed him. So after he finished his degree he went back and he set up something called Fight for Peace. Fight for Peace is a large blue structure in the middle of the favela. I went to visit him there, it's quite dangerous. As you go towards the favela, first of all you discover that your driver will not go in, won't even think about it. Then, as you approach you see spikes on the road and near the spikes there will be a seven or eight year old nursing a pistol. And you think "oh dear". And then you notice sitting in the shade is a teenager with a machine gun who is minding the young boy with the pistol. And you think "gosh, this is a bit of a rough place". It is a very rough place. And in the middle of it there is Luke and what Luke does is, he asks himself the question 'what can you do with violent young men to take them out of this culture' and his answer was quite simple: you get them to be very good at violent sports. So he teaches them karate; Luke himself was a champion boxer who represented the university. I think he also represented the UK, a very good boxer himself. So these young men are encouraged to learn really very rough sports like karate, kickboxing, regular boxing. After they've done that for a while and become motivated then they're taught other things like employment skills. Eventually they end up...they've got...one of the things they have in Fight for Peace is do primary school in a year. And they take young boys who can barely read or write but can fire a gun. And a year later they can read and write and do arithmetic and become sort of employable. So it is very, very inspiring. And it has to be a matter of enormous pride for the university that one of our anthropology students should do this as a direct consequence of their anthropological work as a University of Edinburgh student. If you are in Rio and you are feeling brave I would encourage you to go. But don't tell your driver where you're going until you're quite close because they won't go there. It is a very inspiring thing indeed. And here's the interesting thing which I feel I ought to tell you: why is this big concrete structure bright blue? Why would a big concrete box be bright blue? Any guesses? Think about big buildings you know that are bright blue.

Audience member: United Nations

Principal: No. Any other big buildings that are bright blue. Yes, at the back? It's not a Greek Orthodox Church, no. It's Ikea. The big corporate sponsor is Ikea. So, from the outside it does look like a place you can buy meatballs and hard to assemble furniture. When Luke tried to raise the money, the banks, a lot of respectable organisations wouldn't touch it because they just didn't like the idea of the association with drugs and violence. So the firm that stepped in to provide the serious money to keep Luke's operation going is actually Ikea, and I think it's just an enormous credit to them. So I encourage you to go to that big blue box on the way to Midlothian and buy some meatballs. Because some of the money will find its way back to Brazil. So, very inspiring, and I'm delighted at Fabiola Gianotti. Fabiola was in charge of the experimental work at CERN, she was, as it were, the number two to Rolf Heuer when work on the large hadron collider that led to the discovery of the Higgs Boson was done. She's been an honorary professor of

ours for a long time. She's now succeeded Rolf and is the Director General of CERN. A tremendously important association for the university. And then here are some more key figures: Stuart Munro who is our wonderful Vice-Convener, very pleased that he is there. I'm very pleased that Lord McConnell is there. When Lord McConnell was First Minister he made the intervention on the Fresh Towns initiative that permitted international...sometimes people will say "oh no it wasn't the politician, it was the civil servant" or whatever. In this case, because I had direct interaction with him on this, because I went to Jack McConnell to ask him to find a way to get the Scottish government to cover international students' visa fees, there is no question that he gets personal credit for this very important initiative. Just in the way that the Open University actually did come out of Harold Wilson's head while he was on holiday and not some of the other people who claim to have invented it. It is also the case that Jack really does get the primary credit for the Fresh – and that is really why it is the case that we are in such a strong international position that put us on a curve where we've stayed.

So, where are we? Well, our income keeps rising: 841 million. Give you some context since 2002: that's tripled. Research grants representing 29% of income. An interesting number that's not there is formal funding from the Scottish government, which is now at a quarter, less than our research grants. A quarter of the money we get and you might ask yourself rhetorically, is that really a basis for continuing to fiddle around with our governance? Anyway 25% comes from there. A key thing which the Scottish government is very pleased about and we're very pleased about is, we created 44 new companies last year. And if you go into the vicinity of the university now, you go to Argyle House, probably the ugliest 60s building in the middle of town, even uglier than the Appleton tower, built by the government originally as a tax office, so many residents have fond memories of going to Argyle House to argue with the Tax Inspectors in it. What is it now? Well it's got floors of start-up companies, mostly coming out of the University of Edinburgh and mostly having a technology aspect. Just as the ugly sixties building alongside the Dick Vet is full of companies. I mean one of the nice things about computer scientists like me is if they start companies you don't need to put them in something shiny with glass, they don't need any lasers or stuff, you can just put them in the ugliest little box you can find and, provided they've got wi-fi and paper and pencil they'll be able to start their business.

And our net assets are heading towards two billion, quite substantial. We had in Old College an open air cinema which was lovely, India South-Asia week. We keep on doing new things with our massive open on-line course and more than 2 million learners now. In October we launched a MOOC on understanding football; we want to help Scotland. Obviously it's a long game but we introduced our robot football team a couple of years ago and we've now introduced online education for the general Scottish public called 'understanding football' and I encourage all of you to sign up for this massive open online course which you will find me speaking and when you see me speaking you'll see me standing. It's a new massive open online course called 'stand up get fit' and it's produced by a partnership between public health and sport and it's about how people like yourselves can become fitter by spending less time sat on the sofa watching television eating chocolates and more time standing, or walking around or running, things like that. So look out for it. All you have to do is google 'Stand up the University of Edinburgh' and you'll find yourself in a massive open online course and, as a result of taking it, you'll be a healthier and happier person.

Very moving commemoration of the First World War and, of course, you know in terms of the history of the University of Edinburgh such a powerful and emotional thing. You just look at the war memorial and you see those photographs, 1914/15/16, of columns of young men in uniform going down Princes Street. These are University of Edinburgh students going off to be killed in France. So it is a very powerful thing for us and also the women associated with the university who went off, against instruction, to be nurses in France. So in terms of our university's history the First World War was very powerful.

We did tremendously well in the research excellence framework. We keep on looking for scholarships in different places, we're getting good support – Deutsche Post is giving us good support, which is nice – and we are looking more and more at different international foundations for support, particularly for

international students. We have the best bursaries in Britain, so if it's students within the United Kingdom applying to us we're good, but, as you've seen from figures, we have many thousands coming to us from the rest of the European Union, from the rest of the world, that we need to get scholarships for them too, so we're working hard at that.

Innovative Learning Week. Lots of things including the overhaul of a local primary school, Edinburgh College of Art's fashion doing very, very well, support from the UK government for the biology complex in the new Centre for Tissue Repair. As I said we do get 25% formal funding from the Scottish Government but we get an awful lot of capital for important scientific buildings from the UK government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, has highly commendable agenda and while I'm mentioning him I could also say he is a direct supporter of Luke Dowdney and Fight for Peace, the sort of thing that might make some politicians nervous, but at No. 11 Downing Street he hosted a spectacular even for Luke which I was privileged to be at, to raise funds for the wonderful work that Luke is doing in Brazil.

We had Spy Week, and, as you know, many of your fellow alumni and probably a couple of you in the room are spies. Another part of the university's involvement with GCHQ past and present, MI5 and 6 and of course Bletchley Park. We have wonderful mathematicians, why wouldn't we have the odd spy or Cobra as we do. We have wonderful sporting alumni. Very good to read the recent newspaper accounts of the gravitational wave discovery. This university, like Glasgow, has been banging on about dark matter for more than 40 years so, for us to finally see something that our scientists were saying was the case more than 40 years ago has now been physically demonstrated to have been the case; that is very exciting.

Very important work on dementia. We had the most successful meeting in the Carlyle Circle – the Carlyle Circle is more than 1400 alumni who have made serious provision for the university in their wills – we had a meeting in London focussing on dementia last week. It was incredibly powerful. We had Sally Magnusson who's obviously written a wonderful book about her mother's fight with dementia, who gave personal testimony, we had Professor Church who leads the School of Health and Social Science who does work on how one should structure nursing homes but also private homes to support people with dementia. And then we had Professor Ritchie who is a wonderful medical scientist whose work is concerned with the prevention of dementia and what can be done to either slow it down or stop it. So three very powerful speakers. The biggest turnout I have ever seen, we were just scouring the Caledonian Club for more chairs and having to bring them in. It was absolutely packed. And there's a nice picture of Professor Ritchie, on the left there who is our most important recent recruit, who is an international expert that we recruited from Imperial, London, on the prevention of dementia.

Edinburgh Award doing very well and is a way of giving recognition for student volunteering which is a massive activity. Thousands of hours of work helping thousands of people in Edinburgh, in different ways. We mentioned ERI. We are one of the best universities in the world for commercialisation, raising 237 million, a cumulative total of more than 400 companies. This is serious stuff, and serious stuff which is very noticeable. When you read in the newspapers, and both the Guardian and the Times had articles recently saying Edinburgh is now only second to London for technology start-ups. Those technology start-ups pretty much only come from the one place. They come from Informatics, they come from George Square, really in the vicinity here. So we really are an immensely powerful driver for that and we know now, we have really good understanding about how you support these companies in their early stages.

Doing very well in our relationship with China; new joint degree with Xi'an University. The sister of this building is in Hong Kong. I opened it with the First Minister in the summer and it is very attractive because it is badged with the University of Edinburgh badge, it is closely related to this and it is paid for entirely by the Hong Kong government, which seems to me to be an extremely sound arrangement. I think that's a demonstration of the power of the university. In a few days' time I shall be in Bangalore [where] there is the Indian centre for brain repair, a very powerful neuroscience centre funded by the Indian Ministry of Science, and when you go and look at the logo on the door there are two logos: there is the National Centre

for Biological Sciences of India and there is the University of Edinburgh, which has got our scientists and their scientists paid for by the Indian government, and next time you're in Shanghai I strongly encourage you to go to Donghua University, China's leading fashion university. I encourage you for two reasons: one is they have a stunning museum of fashion, particularly showing the transition from traditional Chinese costume to what we think of sort of characteristic, a style of Chinese dress which is mostly invented by French tailors working for the European Community in Shanghai, but that whole story is depicted. And you'll also see a lovely building where students are learning fashion. These are students who will end up spending a year or two in Edinburgh. You will see the University of Edinburgh logo on the door. You may bump into a flying academic from Edinburgh College of Art and there is, this is the thing you will enjoy the most, a wonderful server room which is called the Fashion Cloud. And it has got in it computers with massive databases of different designs for garments. Isn't that fabulous - the Fashion Cloud. And we have a co-stake in this and this is paid for entirely by the Municipal Government of Shanghai, who think it's a good thing.

We had another MOOC, in understanding Scottish Independence, very successful, and we have established something new in the world of massive open online courses, that is ones that are happening in real time. I'm told Charlie Jeffery and colleagues did the one for the Scottish referendum. Nobody had done a massive open online course where, day by day, the data that was being analysed would change. And if you can remember (I'm sure you've all been very successful at forgetting) but if you are unfortunate enough to remember the Scottish Referendum, then you'll remember that just before it there was a Sunday Times poll which said it was going to be a 'yes' vote. If you were taking that MOOC on that Sunday, gosh it was busy. And it was full of students and tutors all of whom were being surprised by this real time event that they had not predicted. That is to say a poll that said the independence vote was going to be a yes. And now, of course, this is a model that's being copied around the world but it's a way of using massive open online courses that was invented by us in the exciting context of the Scottish referendum. We've got our centre for constitutional change and obviously the EU referendum will give us another opportunity for an exciting real time MOOC.

We're doing tremendously well on big data collaboration between the five leading universities in Britain. You might be surprised, you might say to yourself "that sort of makes sense but why Warwick?" Well, Warwick is either the best or the second best, depending on how you view Cambridge University in Britain for mathematics. Big data does not just depend on being able to build very large computers, also you have to build very large computers as we do, as we have been doing in Edinburgh for a very long time, but you also need to be very sophisticated with the mathematics. So the Alan Turing Institute combines Edinburgh's best in computer science with Britain's best mathematics. Very, very powerful and for us it means, now, as a consequence of the Alan Turing Institute, we will be hosting an Intel advanced architecture group. Intel, as you all know if you've got a smartphone or a computer at home, it almost certainly is powered by an Intel chip. Doesn't matter what is says on the outside, 80% of the powerful computer processors on the planet come from Intel. And for people who designed new architectures they're coming to join us as an appropriate place to do that. And that, for us, is a massive win indeed. And just to go back to that one, Intel, we have a tremendously good support from the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, and in fact, to be accurate, overnight, I received a very nice email from the Deputy First Minister's Office offering our Intel colleagues a dinner in Bute House. So, getting very focussed and good support from the Scottish government.

We do a lot on deaf education. Has been a key area for us for a long time where we apply technology there and this is a really helpful thing. Looking at banking and where it is going, trying to make it more robust. I think we would all like more robust banks, maybe you'd like a more exciting bank. I would like more robust banks, certainly. And we're doing lots of stuff with scientific engagement in geo-science, in chemistry in outreach and music.

Summary: we're doing immensely well. All the serious world league tables have us in the world top 25. We are incredibly diverse, it is part of our strategy. We aim to cover all the different types of engineering. We've got a very big veterinary school as well as a very big medical school; that's on purpose. We are now going into agriculture to broaden that base; we keep on teaching new languages, I'm very proud of that, very important that we do that. We had a visit from the Finnish ambassador yesterday. One of the reasons we have good relationships with many of the smaller countries in Europe is because we...actually we had a visit from Russia too and they gave us a big present, beautiful books, Ivan the Terrible history....but to go back to the smaller countries, obviously we've been teaching Russian for zonks. But we are increasingly doing more with the countries where those languages have a smaller population base, you know, like Finnish, like Hungarian, like Gaelic. Even Welsh..gosh! So we're doing very well in diversity. Our research is world leading in very important areas like the environment, like medicine, amazingly strong company formation. We make a local impact, a national impact and, obviously, we're a world player and I thank you very much for your attention. Thank you very much.

Rector: Now again can remind you, if you wish to speak put your hand up and wait for one of the roving microphones to come round and state clearly your name, degree and year of graduation and we've also got Gordon receiving, we hope, email questions. So what would be the first question from the floor to the Principal?

Michael Conway: Hello

Rector: Yes sir

Michael Conway: Michael Conway, MA 1986. First of all you mentioned GCHQ: do you know Dave McBrien the best quizmaster in Edinburgh, solved the puzzle, or appears to have solved the puzzle, he was on the telly the other day there? And secondly, I don't wish to get involved in political controversy but what would the effect on the university be of Britain leaving the European Union?

Principal: The effect would be awful. We get increasing support from the European Research Council: about 35 million a year now, it's heading towards 100 million a year. We have very many partners in the EU countries, universities that we work very closely with in research, universities that we exchange students with. For this university it would be very problematic. Court has permitted me to take a public stance on this on the university's behalf which is we are opposed.

Ritchie Walker: Ritchie Walker, MA 1968. Principal thank you very much, super report. Following on to your response to Michael's question there, if that's the biggest risk possible, leaving the EU, what might be the second biggest risk, in your mind, for the university looking ahead over the next 12 months?

Principal: The second biggest, undoubtedly, would be a negative move by the Home Office to make it even harder for students to get visas. Essentially what has happened is there have been, continually, changes to the visa system to make it more demanding for staff and students to come here. I am constantly battling that, as my colleagues are. We have ameliorated quite a lot of what would have been very negative changes. An example of a change that would have been awful for Scotland was a very tough limit of four years for undergraduates. That was on the assumption that all students were taking 3 year degrees and the extra year would be enough, and when we went and explained to them... it is very surprising how often in London the phrase "that's not true in Scotland" passes one's lips. And you say "that it's not true in Scotland" and they say things like "well there wouldn't be very many taking the four year degree" and "four years is that long they would have finished anyway"; and we managed to get it to be the length of the visa being the length of the degree plus one year which was rational. And that was a change that we had to fight, the first two times of asking pretty much everything the Home Office suggests. The first two times you ask they say "boil your head" and the third time, with some probability, which, probably about 40% they agree with what you're saying. So clearly, when I've done internal accounts of challenges until

recently, the Home Office and the visa regime has been the top one. For us as a university, which is a highly international community, we want to recruit the best data scientists in the world. The best data scientist in the world happens to be a Chinese national who spent most of his career in the US. We found when he was with us he was a hard person to get a visa for actually, given his complicated life. It would be terrible (no harm to Scottish data scientists) but if you're looking at any category you want the best in the world.

Ann Smyth: Ann Smyth, Science 1970. Principal, given increasing attention in the media, how is the university doing now on the issue of gender inequality in pay? What are our credentials like as the spotlight swings on that issue?

Principal: That's a very good question. We're working very hard on that. In the Remuneration Committee we look at the different types of gender inequality in pay quite systematically. We have an external observer who gives us a commentary on each year. After pay has been revised we get an analysis of how we're doing in terms of the different ways of computing the gender pay gap. We're engaged in various sorts of proactive actions. Things are, at the moment, obviously quite unsatisfactory in terms of gender pay gap. On the other hand things have been slowly improving. Between this year and last year it improved of the order of 5%. So a 5% reduction in the gender pay gap and we will continue to work on that.

Rector: Yes sir. The gentleman in the brightly striped tie.

Matthew McPherson: Thanks I'll take that as a compliment. Matthew McPherson, 2011 MA. Principal you touched on the importance there at the end of having the best in the world at what we do, in recruiting the best in the world. My question is about widening participation in an increasingly diverse international agenda. I was wondering if you could touch upon what we can do to ensure we're attracting those who are here to learn and not simply those who can afford to be here with high levels of fees. And also what is the university doing to retain students from poorer backgrounds while they're at Edinburgh, with a particular emphasis like costs of courses or transport?

Principal: For us this is an absolutely critical agenda in terms of students who will be badged widening participation by the Scottish markers that increased for this university by 7%, and in fact in last year's recruitment round more than half the Scottish domiciled students coming in had at least one of the Scottish markers of social deprivation. Within the United Kingdom we are very proud: we have the best bursaries in Britain. It's very much a needs driven approach, so this is resources that goes to the families who have documented low income, so that is very good. In addition we have a programme of accommodation bursaries. A particular issue with students from poorer backgrounds, particularly if they are within 30 or 40 miles of Edinburgh, there is a natural tendency of the family who doesn't have very much money, to say "well why didn't you stay at home, keep sharing the bedroom with your sibling, that will save us a lot of money". And in that situation we use our own resources and I've persuaded Unite, a big private provider of student accommodation, to provide accommodation bursaries so some students in that situation get free accommodation. Unite is expensive, very high quality student accommodation and at my encouragement their board met in the Raeburn Room and decided, after a presentation from myself, to provide accommodation bursaries. So we are working very hard at that. I think in the UK context we're doing very well. Where there is anxiety is students from poor backgrounds, say from sub Saharan Africa or from the poor Latin American countries... and that's the reason why the Court on my recommendation appointed Professor Sue Wilburn as Vice-Principal for Global Access. And Sue's job is very simple: it is to drum up studentship and bursary support for poor students from overseas, because you're quite right, we want the best we don't want the richest.

Rector: Thank you Matthew. Next one?

John Clifford: John Clifford, MSc, 1990, Legal Studies. I'd like to follow on from Matt McPherson's very valid point. There's another one of course, that a lot of students who come here from overseas do not

necessarily have English as a first language or even a particularly skilful language, and I wonder what the university can do to help these students expressing themselves in this other language, either with limited knowledge of English but also when they have to leave the English language to formulate something in their own language and come back in a process of translation, so often the result can look more like muddled thinking, and I wonder if there's any way that the people who are teaching across the university can actually address this sometimes very delicate issue?

Principal: John I'm sorry I don't accept the premise. We require a very high documented standard of English as part of the admissions process. We offer extra English instruction for students who fail that prior to admitting them, not after we've admitted them, and then, obviously, when students are here there are courses in English as a foreign language which are readily available. But I really don't accept the premise. I think in my capacity as President of the Senate I would certainly be hearing from academic colleagues if there was any sense... I mean, my own experience...and I have supervised in my career quite a number of students, from the people's republic of China as well as from other parts of the world... my own experience of students from overseas is they come here with a standard of English which is sometimes better than those who come from some of the urban areas of the United Kingdom.

Rector: Yes, we have questions at the back. Yes sir, four rows back and then after, one at the very back.

Zohreh Farzad: Dr Zohreh Farzad one of your products in 1980, medical school cancer scientist, UCLA faculty in cancer research. I did come speaking fluent language, including another three languages, so just to answer the gentleman there, my question is related to... I recall Edinburgh University nearly lost me when I was establishing pre domain technology in the surgery because Mrs Thatcher suddenly increased tuition to £8000 and I couldn't afford it of course. I was an Iranian/American student so I had to leave. I remember we did quite an extensive study then, how many percentage of research in Edinburgh University is done by foreign students. By the way thank you very much for a very extensive lecture, I enjoyed it. Would you be able to tell me if we have such an increase in tuition how much it's going to affect our research in Edinburgh University because people won't be able to come over and afford the tuition? Thank you.

Principal: I'm just going to look back at our data slides and see. I mean that's a very good question. I don't have the number readily to hand myself. I could guess but that wouldn't be helpful if I were to guess. No, that's the level of study but it's not broken down. It's a good question. We can certainly answer it. I would be very surprised if more than half of our postgraduate researchers were not from outside the United Kingdom. I mean, when I gave a reception for 60 new computer science PhD students in the week and I asked everybody where they came from, and the ones who said things like Dundee or Birmingham were puzzled. Because that wasn't the normal answer which was Shanghai or Moscow or such so. Certainly we looked at where our companies come from and I told you we created 44 companies last year. The majority of companies created by the University are led by students not staff, and the majority of those students are not UK nationals. But it's a very good question because I could use the answer as part of my argument with the Home Office. So we will get the answer, also we will send you the answer. Undoubtedly the case, it is also the case that the events you describe was catastrophic for international students in the UK and our levels were particularly catastrophic for postgraduate students from Africa. And Frances Dow who knows these matters very well is nodding in agreement. We are just about recovered to where we were before the Thatcher intervention was, in terms of supporting postgraduate students from Africa. Because those students depended particularly on Commonwealth scholarships, those fee change moves were devastating.

Rector: The gentleman in the fourth row.

Brian Smith: Brian Smith, 1966, I think. One's conscious that George Davey will have written about the way in which many students, particularly in the 19th century, left without graduating because they were pleased to get their DP. Currently, roughly, what is the percentage of drop-out rates within the various

schools and how does that compare with other universities; people who failed to complete the course to which they were admitted, be it undergraduate or research?

Rector: Brian it's about 5%. We'll give you the accurate number but it's about 5%. We do very well compared to most universities. You're quite right, I mean, apart for the medical students who wanted the degrees for their walls, in the 19th century most students didn't graduate. The reason McEwan Hall is located where it is, is because it was the medical students who wanted to graduate and that's why it was stuck bang on to...no, seriously... The other thing they did - those were more informal days - is if a student wrote a very good essay the supervisor could bring them into the Senate, they would read the essay, and if the Senate liked it they would have a wee vote and they got an honorary MA on the spot. For the one essay. I mean that seems to me an extremely good incentive scheme that could drive up essay writing standards: one good essay equals an MA. I think there are members of the student community who would try to rise to that challenge.

Rector: Do we have another one?

Philip Mawer: Philip Mawer, MA, 1971 in Politics. You've given us a very impressive account, Principal, of what the University of Edinburgh does well. But what in your assessment should we do better? Where are the areas where, if you could wave a magic wand, you would want to see us up our game even further?

Principal: That's an excellent question. The key one is, as it were, if our external priorities relate particularly to the Home Office and to the EU... the internal priority, the top one, is improving the student learning experience. We have wonderful quality staff and that is very much to do with improving processes, ensuring students get appropriate assessment, ensuring that they get the results of their assessment punctiliously, ensuring that the academic year is structured in a way that works well for the students. So I think we have plenty of scope to improve the processes that support the students during their learning experience. We have some wonderful buildings and we have some awful buildings. We have done particularly well around George Square, we've done amazingly out at Little France, out at Easter Bush and more recently at the Western General. We haven't done well enough at King's Buildings for quite a chunk of that 1.3 billion I was telling you will be for spending will have to be spent there. But there clearly are improvements that we could do there. I think we have, and I'll be very interested in ideas people might have. We have a task to improve the sense of community. We are located in seven main sites around the city and one outside the city in Midlothian. We're a community of 50,000: 15,000 staff, 35,000 students. People were disappointed when, before my time, the Staff Club in Chambers Street went. But the Staff Club in Chambers Street was being competed with by, if I can put it this way, more effective restaurants and was in any event serving a relatively small proportion of that what is now a community of 50,000. So I'm very keen that schools have tea parties, barbecues, social events, very keen on the open air cinema in the old college. Very keen on our participation in all the festivals. It's good for the city. It's also good for the university to get a sense of itself as part of the book festival, as part of the Fringe, as part of the science festival. But a physically dispersed community of 50,000, how you get it to feel like a community, that's quite a tough job and I'm really open to good suggestions. I noticed that Princeton, which I was visiting recently at the reunions, one of the ways they use for getting a sense of community is that each year designs an outlandish garb in university colours and you see the very distinguished politicians and others prancing around in orange and black pyjamas or very strange things. Obviously Princeton is a much smaller place than Edinburgh but when you see these photographs you can see this incredible sense... and whether the General Council are willing to adopt lurid costumes in an attempt to get a greater sense of community in the General Council, that's obviously an initiative I'll leave to Charles. And apparently they have very lively debates about, shall we really wear pyjamas cum tuxedos in orange and black so shall instead, we all wear onesies?

Rector: I can see a rise in pyjama parties. We've got a little more time. Can I just check whether there's anything online?

Gordon Cairns: Yes, lots of questions online, but can I firstly perhaps read something out that's just come in from Japan midnight last night? More of an opportunity than a question for the Principal, from Meiko Masuda, apologies if I'm mispronouncing his name, graduate from 1995, PhD, Political Studies. Thank you for your information. After graduating I have established Corporation Japan hearing dogs for deaf people administered by Japanese Ministry of Labour and Health. Observing this 20 years after graduating I think we, graduates of Edinburgh University, could make better relations with university and graduates in Japan. If you allow us to publish email newsletters of Japanese graduates of Edinburgh University I suppose we could make much more useful relationships between Edinburgh and Japan.

Rector: I'm very enthusiastic and I'm strongly encouraging our development and alumni office to make it easier for groups of alumni in different parts of the world to self-organise. I think it's a great idea and I'd like to see it all over the place.

Gordon Cairns: The first questions is from Keddie Law who is an MA Honours graduate from Geography 1968:

Leading universities and the compilers of university league tables attach much importance to the number of entry points required. Can you tell me if any research has been carried out to determine the degree of correlation between students' entry qualifications and their final degree awards?

Rector: That's a very good question. Colleagues, actually, in our university, have done research on this and published it and we must make the link available to the document. It's been published in 'Scottish Affairs', a journal on contemporary political and social issues, and probably, as you'd expect, prior qualifications are the main factor. So if the student has got SQF level 7 advanced higher or strong 'A' levels they are likely to do better than a student who doesn't. But it's not a 100% connection. Somebody I know from my own working area... there is no guaranteed link between all 'A's at higher of A level and first class degree but there is certainly a correlation.

Rector: Any more?

Gordon Cairns: Lots more.

Rector: Take one or two.

Gordon Cairns: Lesley McLeod, a BA in general Arts, 1983, asks the Principal to provide an update on actions to attract more legacy giving and what the programme of engagement has secured to date.

Principal: Very good question indeed. The number of legacy donors over the last year has about, over the last 10 years, has about doubled. We now have 1400. So these are people who have given the university formal notice of their intention to make a reasonable bequest in their will. The income from such legacy donors at the moment is running at about 3 million a year: that is inevitably an underestimate. My wife and I work closely with the Carlyle Circle which is those 1400. Inevitably those who have made a provision are also those who intervene now and provide resources, and that community [is] particularly strong on scholarships and bursaries. But for the long term support of the university, my view is the Carlyle Circle which presents a long term promise, is the key thing. You know, 20 years from now that will be more important for the support, particularly for students 20 years on from now, than anything else we're doing.

Rector: Attendees at the meeting will be pleased. We have a new Vice-Principal and Executive Director of Development and Alumni, who is Chris Cox, who is sitting in the second row, and I'm sure he's interested in this conversation.

Principal: Well stand up Chris

Rector: Welcome

Principal: Yes, and to emphasise, as is well known, I'm an extremely shy person. Chris, on the other hand, is not. So you can go up to him and say 'Chris, here's a cheque' or 'come and advise me about my will' and Chris will not look diffident or embarrassed, he will say 'right, let's just do that'.

Rector: Any more?

Gordon Cairns: Yes, we could perhaps pass this one to Chris and give him a bad pass. It's a question from Helen Reilly, MA, Economic and Social History, 1996. Heading 'Support for Women'.

In the recent election the information I received from the university I was disappointed to see there was only one female candidate standing. There have been many studies about how women hold themselves back and are discouraged from participation in leadership roles and I wondered if the university was actively doing anything to encourage and support women? Not only to stand for positions on committees but also during their studies at the university.

Principal: That's a very good question and the data is very clear: women are more diffident about applying for senior jobs than men and they are much more diffident about standing for contested elections than men. And this isn't something to do with universities; this applies in big companies, this applies in local councils, this applies across the piece. So it's obviously a deep seated cultural issue. Here we have good maternity and parental leave policies, we have mentoring opportunities. We've been very successful in getting Athena Silver Swan awards which are to do with how well we support women: a third of our Heads of School are currently women. If you look at both the Court and the senior management team of the university, it's pretty much 50:50. And this has taken work, and its work that we'll have to continue.

Rector: Shall we take one or two more?

Gordon Cairns: There's a slight follow up to that question, perhaps better directed to Mike in this regard, from Cherry Knott, BA Arts Honours 1968.

I'm concerned there seems to be so few women candidates for council membership given the high percentage of Edinburgh University graduates who are women, many of whom achieve a great deal in their lives and careers. Why is this? Is the Council also concerned (if not, why not?) And what are the Council proposing to do about it?

Rector: Mike?

Mike Mitchell: Thank you. Yes I mean, I suppose the quick answer is, yes we are concerned and we would like to see more women standing. It's important to say that we absolutely do not discriminate in any way against women. We would encourage them to stand and the only thing we can say is, when we put out our next lot of publicity encouraging candidates to stand, we will emphasise that we would very much appreciate more women standing. Given that these are open elections, anyone can stand. It is also incumbent on the female population to stand as candidates as well as for us to encourage them.

Rector: Ok. Gordon, do you have any more?

Gordon Cairns: Yes, there's one here following on from what the Principal was saying in his address, from Dr Neil Milliken who only admits to being here in the 70s, so I'm assuming that's earlier 70s than later. When at Edinburgh University it was a genuine Scottish based University; the only nationality upon which it has achieved its hundreds of years international reputation in science, engineering and medical discoveries. There seems few Scottish students now but an obvious incoming English based student culture, and foreign

students is so large now that cohesion and sense of home grown loyalty and community appears absent. The question is: why do we need to be growing and growing just to increase numbers and income. There is that loss of community and belonging as there once was.

Principal: Very good! As somebody who's half Irish I do like a question where I can robustly say that is all nonsense. That question is based on nonsensical premises. Let us be clear: the other ancient Scottish universities, 2 got papal bulls from the Pope in Rome, our friends in St Andrews got their start from the excommunicated imprisoned in Avignon anti- Pope actually in prison in Castille in Spain. We don't have the benefit of a start from Rome or Avignon; we started essentially with Mary Guise, the French regent, and who lived in Little France and who gave us the land. And our starting base for the academic curriculum came from France it was basically the Paris curriculum, the characteristic Scottish curriculum, and we tell off a lot of Americans for believing it's a US invention, but actually we got it in Scotland from the French. Our curriculum of broad philosophical base came from France then we refined our system of instruction under the illustrious Carstares, the last Principal of the university to be physically tortured in public. And he was suspected, entirely correctly by the way, of being a secret agent for the Dutch and plotting to bring over William I. He was tortured in public with thumb screws. He persuaded them that it wasn't true. They allowed him to continue being Principal. It was true and following the glorious revolution William rewarded him. And what Carstares did, he brought over the Dutch system of Professors. So if you look at this university's characteristic approach to university education, it is hybrid. It is French, Dutch. We had our first Jewish Professor, which is interestingly before our first Catholic professor, 300 years ago, who was a professor of Hebrew and Oriental language. We had a professor of Arabic language 250 years ago and, as I told you, 10% of our students in the 18th century came from the United States. In the 19th century we had the largest group of students from India in any foreign country and we were the first university outside Asia to have a student from China. We are as international as you like and James VI promised us - the deal in our enabling Charter was clear - he would give us a 'bairn's gift', he would give us a lot of money and we would until time immemorial call ourselves the King James VI university. He gave us no money but as you walk back for your lunch if you look over the main arch you will find the one remnant of that charter inscribed on the arch. It says very clearly Jacobus Sixtus. However James VII was a good lad. James VII gave us money for four regents but he attached a condition to that: the condition he attached was that we had to recruit the regents, the staff, from mainland Europe, because the academic quality in Oxford and Cambridge and the other Scottish universities was not up to the task of educating the students in Edinburgh. So we had a big recruitment drive in the beginning of the 17th century, focussed, like recent recruitment drives, on who out there, outside of the United Kingdom. So deeply international, part of our identity. And the actual number of Scottish students as I said earlier, and I'll be very careful about this during my tenure, the actual number of Scottish students has gone up each year. Of course, the number of students from other countries has gone up faster. We are very proud of our international identity. The international identity is not new. We were teaching using French, Dutch methods, US and then subsequently Indian students hundreds of years ago. And the students were organised into nations. I mean, a slightly elaborate notion of nations, Fife was treated as a separate nation so if you came here from across the water you were in the nation of Fife, and then a rather slightly more convincing nations like France, England.

Rector: As you can probably hear I come from the nation of Glasgow. But I did choose Edinburgh because it was more international. This is known in Glasgow as 'selling oot'.

We're wending our way towards our lunch. I wanted to ask the Principal a forward looking question: how do you think higher education will evolve as society evolves and the digital economy evolves?

Principal: The answer would take about two hours Steve.

Rector: You've got a few minutes.

Principal: I mean what we see, which is very straightforward, is demand for higher education rising. At the moment there are 40,000 things called universities in the world, about 20,000 of them have got PhD programmes and we would recognise them as looking like universities and they're not evenly distributed. In particular a third of the world, India and China, really don't have very many universities at all. If you look at the age demographic in India then it is quite clear that India will overtake China in the next few years as a net exporter of students. The Indian higher education system is not adequate to meet the aspirations of the growing Indian middle class. So we know that the demand for Higher Education will increase, that is a clear tendency. We know that technology is having a tremendous impact: this university now has more than 60 online masters; in its massive open online courses it has got more than 2 million [participants]. I have got a talk which I would be happy to give to the General Council sometime called 'MOOCs and Monsters: an ecology for e-learning' and one of the things I ask in that talk is, has the new boom in e-learning and the new boom in MOOCs and online masters, has it displaced or, as it were killed, any of the current conventional provision and the answer from the data is very clear: it has not, it has augmented it. What we are seeing is a steady, powerful growth in higher education around the world. We see it as steadily becoming more international. We see consortia like Arizona State University, Kings University and the University of New South Wales as establishing an international consortia where students move. You see us in university DAS 21 which allows us to work with the universities of Cape Town and Monterrey and the University of Delhi where I'll be in a couple of days. This university teaches electronically, jointly with the University of Delhi, interestingly in the humanities areas. Obviously people aren't too surprised to see us going online in science but actually this university's single most successful massive online course, which for a while was the *world's* most successful open online course, was our 'introduction to philosophy' which was studied around the world and has generated about 2 million pounds more investment from outsiders who are so impressed by our ability to teach critical thinking to the world using electronic means. So I see a higher education as developing. Because of technology and the rate of change, continuous professional development, a very important area for us. Very pleased that Professor Finkelstein has joined us to head what was the office of lifelong learning. It's now a centre for open learning and notice there that one of its key strands is postgraduate continuing professional development. It isn't just doctors and engineers, all professions now, 10 years after you've entered into them have changed. People will want to go back to their universities. So we see universities becoming more powerful, we see them becoming larger. I don't imagine many universities will go away. Although they do. People think universities are there forever: there used to be a University of Northampton, University of Kilkenny, to name two historic universities that no longer exist. There used to be a University of North London and a London Guildhall University to name two more universities that don't exist anymore. Some universities will go away; there will be merges and assimilations. Probably the universities that are most vulnerable are small universities in the middle of fields, if I can put it that way. If you're in the middle of an urban area, if you've got a catchment of a few million and people can get to you by public transport, then you can be cheap and cheerful. If you're going to be in a field and, for these purposes Oxford and Cambridge are fields, you've got to be very, very good at the research to survive. Going out into a field then you're going to have to work for a couple of hundred years to establish your reputation. If you're in an urban area - and 90% of people in Britain can go to a university by public transport - so if you're in an urban area, as a university you will almost certainly survive. You may tailor what you do and you may do less research but you can survive. So I don't see a dramatic reduction in the number of universities, I see many more university alliances. I see universities becoming bigger, People say to me 'Oh Principal, 35000's a large number' and I say 'no it's not!' When I was a post graduate at the University of Texas 40 years ago it was bigger than 35,000 and from the point of view of successful big US universities, we're not big at 35,000. We'll get bigger. But I see universities growing, becoming more international. And I see as they become more international like corporations they'll be less dependent on the careful oversight of local governments. If you look at Google or if you look at New York University, these are both institutions. I'll be speaking at the Google headquarters in a couple of weeks' time in California. But Google is around the world. I can visit New York university in New York but I can visit them in Florence, I can visit them in Bloomsbury I can visit them in Paris or Milan. So we will see universities internationalised in terms of their physicality as well as their student body, we see them using electronic reach. I think the demand for higher education, the demographics are clear. So being a

university teacher is a good business. The demand is going to go up and not just for conventional undergraduate education, for postgraduate education, but particularly the really strong demand will be in continuous professional development over time and that will be increasingly delivered in a hybrid mode, not entirely electronic. So if you come to the University of Edinburgh and you do the online masters in advanced surgery, then out of pedantry we do require you to come here, go to the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh check you are who you say you are, you can use that laser etc. Online masters will typically have some physical element too. It might be going to a centre in Geneva with the other Swiss students, or it might be going on Easyjet and coming to Edinburgh for the weekend. There is a long version of that answer Rector, and, if you've got the patience for it...I was once - I'm going to call your bluff - I was once invited to Norway and I said, 'that's very difficult I can only come to Bergen for one day' and they said 'that's all right, you can give a nine hour lecture and we'll give you an hour break for lunch' and that is exactly what I did, I gave a nine hour lecture.

Rector: Ok, before you get your break for lunch we have one last...we have two, there's Jonny at the back and we have another one online so we have three or four questions to come before we close. Yes sir?

Roger Windsor: Roger Windsor, Veterinary qualification, 1963; Honours degree in science 1964. It's unusual for me to take issue with the Vice-Chancellor but in fact the online courses have been responsible for the demise of the centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine in Edinburgh. The centre has gone and it has been replaced by online courses.

Principal: There has been an evolution that is true. The number of deserving postgraduate students in Africa that we reach has gone up. So if you go to Tanzania, you go to Uganda, we are helping more paramedics in Africa alone than we used to. I think that's a plus.

Rector: If you want to take this up further you might want to follow it up after the meeting. We have another question near the back, I think, from Jonny Ross-Tatam who is the President of the Student's Association

Jonny Ross-Tatam: Hi Jonny Ross-Tatam, I'll do whatever everyone else does with the MA so I'm MA History 2017

Rector: You hope.

Jonny Ross-Tatam: Yeah, should be alright. We talked earlier about bursaries that Edinburgh University gives the students from low income backgrounds and I've talked with you about this Tim, and it was good to see that at Court there remains a commitment to these, and for those students who come from backgrounds of under £16,000, the most deprived, they get £7000 a year which is fantastic. But there was a general understanding at Court that the amount that students from slightly higher income ranges, but still low £20, £25, £30,000, the level of support they get from the university drops off quite significantly. I was wondering if there was any desire to increase investment in the bursaries for students from those low but not lowest income brackets?

Principal: Thank you very much Jonny. Jonny and I outside of Court have discussed the issue. The jargon for this issue which comes from the United States is 'the squeezed middle'. Essentially if you come from a family with almost no resources and you get into the university, an elite university in the United States or you've come from the UK to Edinburgh, you are properly looked after. If your family is very rich you're properly looked after, assuming you've got reasonable relations with your parents I suppose. But there is what is called 'the squeezed middle' which might be where you have got one parent who is in a professional job which earns a bit but doesn't earn very much. And that is a challenge for us. We certainly need to do more analysis there. I'm very keen that we get more resource. I would not want to divert resource from the poorest students to the squeezed middle but I would be very enthusiastic that we secure

more resources and address the questions which is as I said the jargon that is 'the squeezed middle', it's a perfectly intelligible concept and there is a reality to it.

Rector: Thank you. Gordon, I believe you have one last one on email?

Gordon Cairns: Yes, thought it might be quite a good one to finish on. It's from Dr. Roger Kirby who is PhD in 1966 but was actually a member of staff for 40 years. To do with McEwan Hall refurbishment. I have received your January letter requesting support for the McEwan Hall refurbishment. The names of the donors could be listed in the fabric of the new pathway. I assume there will be thousands of donors. Will it be possible for the names to be listed in alphabetical order? I hope so because how else could my children and following generations ever find me?

Principal: Can I say that I am immensely sympathetic to that request so I'll use whatever influence I have to try do get it done in alphabetical order. I was a donor to the big perspex hall that was put over the courtyard of the British Museum, in my role as Master of Birkbeck. And what they gave you there was something roughly like a star map. You got this enormous piece of paper with all these triangles on and there was an x on the one that you had supported. And then you could take the star map and go into the great court and say to your children – I actually did this – and say to your children 'you see that one. No, no that one... three along and two up...that one....! That's the one we supported'. I really hope, I mean, we had a couple of questions where I'm sure the presumptions were wrong. Here I'm sure the assumption's right. I'm sure everybody in this room and thousands of others will have their name on a brick and therefore, we will have to do it in a very orderly way so that everybody's grandchildren or significant others can, in 50 or 100 years from now, find their names. Yes, absolutely right.

Rector: And one more. One very last one.

Gordon Cairns: I'll read this one out. Debate and intellectual enquiry: what steps is the Principal taking to ensure that the University of Edinburgh remains a place where genuine debate and intellectual enquiry can continue, notwithstanding that some members of the university may find particular speakers views or topics uncomfortable or offensive? That was from G J Willie, BSc, 1986.

Principal: That's a very good question. It's a very hard and demanding question. There are essentially two issues here: there's an issue where one has a speaker where the advance understanding is they will be expressing views that are repugnant to a large section of the university community and the issue is...we have what is a very well judged policy called our 'dignity and respect policy' and we then work very hard to assess on the one hand the importance of freedom of speech and, on the other hand, the importance of respecting different elements of the community. So, to take a simple example, if you have a speaker who is violently opposed to homosexuality then there are large elements of the university community who would really take exception to those sentiments being expressed. Likewise in matters relating to the Middle East you may very easily find....so there is an issue there which is very time consuming for myself, the University Secretary, quite often the University Chaplain, to look what can be best done. We have also the additional demand of what's called the 'prevent duty' which came in in September from the Government, which gives on the University to prevent any speech that might be an incitement to terrorism. In a university like this where there may be a couple of hundred events a day with different speakers it is really quite difficult to make judgements, though it is a question of taking advice. Sometimes the solution is to ensure because we're committed to freedom of speech that the event takes place but at the same time, because we're committed to public order and committed to respect, to ensure that anybody coming to the speech a) knows what the subject matter is b) we know who *they* are so the event is ticketed and c) the civil authorities in the form of the police are consulted if that is judged appropriately. And clearly I have a duty to promote academic freedom. I also have a duty to health and safety and situations where 100 police may be required to have order on a narrow pavement, are not hypothetical. They are quite real. So for university officers this is very demanding. We are committed to academic freedom. At the same time we

do want there to be respect for the different elements of our community. We want people to be treated with dignity and I think, both for the officers in the Students Association and the officers in the university, this is really quite challenging and an event can often involve consultation with the Chaplain, can often involve consultation with the police and it might involve consultation with the leaders of different student groups.

Rector: Thank you. I think it is testament to the sophistication of your University Court that when this was discussed it was agreed that the Court would follow the law that was introduced by the government obviously, but that it was still open to students if they wished to campaign against it, even although we would be following what the law lays down. So I think the university is aware, like the Principal said, of all sides of this question. But thank you very much for all those that you've gathered Gordon, and thank you everybody here for all their questions. There were a couple of questions that demanded answers to be sent back to the questioner and we'll, through Mike and the Principal, dig out the relevant facts and send you back those answers. So on behalf of everybody here will you please join me in thanking the Principal.

B Presentation of the Report of the Business Committee

at the General Council Meeting on 13 February 2016

Convener of the Business Committee: Professor Charles Swainson

Thank you Rector. Good morning, Rector, Principal, members of the General Council and guests. I'm pleased to present the report of your Business Committee to this Half Yearly Meeting. Your efforts countering the potentially bad effects of the Scottish Government's proposed Higher Education Scotland bill seem to have paid off and paid off very well. Several substantive changes have been abandoned. The position of the Rector elected by students and staff in the ancient universities is acknowledged and, I think, the threat to our university's charitable status has receded. The stage 2 bill was presented this week and seems to be so far a satisfactory alternative, although I'm sure there's much to do yet to get the detail of that right. I'm immensely grateful to all those of you who participated in our efforts to respond to the consultation in a positive way, either by writing directly to your MSP which many of you did, or by writing and encouraging the General Council to pursue our efforts and it was great to see the alumni in Scotland rise to the challenge and react so well and so positively to what, I believe, was a serious threat. So thank you all very much for that. For those very few of you who supported the bill and didn't support our position I hope you are not too disappointed, but, all I can say is you were vastly outnumbered.

So I'm very pleased now that our university can continue to thrive and remain valuable to society as a strong, independent haven of dissemination of contrary views, be a centre of requirements for intellectual progress and innovation. We, of course, have a powerful platform for that already but the change to this particular piece of legislation, I think, will ensure its future. Later this morning you will hear our Principal give his annual report on the state of the university.

The Committee has had a really good start to the 2015-16 session. Your Finance and Services Standing Committee have had a splendid presentation and very rich discussion with the Director of Finance, Phil McNaull, recently and that has enabled us to be able to report to you that we are convinced of the continuing success of the university to meet the considerable challenges that lie ahead. And, most importantly, the ability of the university, because of the way it's managed, to invest continually in new facilities and new buildings of which this is just another example and there's a staggering building programme for the next ten years ahead which the Principal may well allude to. Indeed, I am a Trustee of another charity which is also embarking on an ambitious building programme and during the tender process we came across the fact that many contractors and subcontractors are already tied up with the University of Edinburgh for the next few years, so that has caused a little local difficulties for other people. But that's okay, that's alright, we're quite happy with that.

Your Public Affairs Standing Committee led by Matt McPherson, who's here this morning, contributed to a very successful alumnus weekend in June where we conducted an interview with the Principal, conducted by Philip Mawer who's sitting in the audience. And the reception, both of which were very well attended and were really very interesting events, particularly the interview with the Principal. Plans are now in place for the June 2016 Half Yearly Meeting in London. It's going to be a less formal meeting, more interactive, we've designed a different style of meeting, and I think it should be a really very interesting and a good meeting to come to. Indeed London alumni have already told us that a quite considerable number of them intend to be there, so I hope a good number of you from Scotland will also be there to swell the numbers and demonstrate the strength of support for alumni in Scotland as well as London and elsewhere. The Standing Committee is examining also, new ways of communicating effectively with alumni, perhaps using social media more extensively, which are important to our younger alumni, so watch this space.

Your Academic Standing Committee led by Stuart Macpherson, who's not able to be with us today, continues to support the staff and the students with efforts to improve the student experience and the tide is turning in that regard. It's quite clear from the discussion that we had as a committee with Senior Vice-Principal Charlie Jeffery that, as he outlined more focussed efforts for improvements in teaching across the board, including more evident support for excellence in teaching, as demonstrated by the staff and reducing the burden of assessment which sometimes gets in the way. We also had a very good meeting with the Edinburgh University Students Association which was very thoughtful, and interesting to hear what they are doing and to be able to dovetail our plans somewhat with theirs and to support them.

And lastly your Constitutional sub-committee led by Gordon Cairns, who's on the electronics today, again, has had considerable input into our response to the draft Higher Education bill and his committee have worked really very hard to try and shape that and push our view. So they can now take a bit of a breather before the next task which will face them, which is to look at the devolution settlement quite closely and examine its impact, potentially, on this university.

The last item I want to mention today is that we're going to experience a big change in the Business Committee, and indeed in the half yearly meetings, because Mary Scott, our secretary there who is sitting in the front row, and who does so much to organise these meetings and indeed everything else that we do, is retiring. Mary has been with the university 25 years; she's been with us 9 years, and I'm sure the other Conveners who have worked with her, and indeed the other Secretaries before Mike, would wish to join me in thanking her very heartily for the tremendous dedication, effort, attention to detail, hand holding, calming, a whole variety of things I could talk about that a secretary fulfils and fulfils very well. So at our next half yearly meeting we will be introducing you to your new secretary.

I'm excited as we start a new term; there is much to do. I'm delighted at the interest shown in candidates for our election and will welcome them at the start of the next session in the summer. Thank you all very much for voting: it's good to see the voting numbers going up.

Rector: that concludes the report of the Business Committee.