



General Council Meeting of 9 June 2018: Annex to Billet

THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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Papers for the General Council Meeting on 9 June 2018

1 Formal communications from the University Court

The following Draft Resolutions have been received:

- 4/2018 Foundation of a Chair of Brain Inflammation and Repair
- 5/2018 Foundation of a Chair of Translational Molecular Medicine
- 6/2018 Foundation of a Chair of Immunology and Infectious Diseases
- 7/2018 Foundation of a Chair of Forest Ecology
- 8/2018 Foundation of a Chair of Antimicrobial Resistance
- 9/2018 Foundation of a Chair of Immunology
- 10/2018 Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations
- 11/2018 Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations
- 12/2018 Higher Degree Programme Regulations
- 13/2018 Foundation of a Chair of Agricultural and Resource Economics
- 14/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Tissue Regeneration and Repair
- 15/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Paediatric Medicine
- 16/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Morphosyntax
- 17/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Intellectual History
- 18/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Labour Law
- 19/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Science and Technology Studies
- 20/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Nineteenth-Century Art
- 21/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair in History
- 22/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of English Language and Book History
- 23/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Cultural Sociology
- 24/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Forensic Clinical Psychology
- 25/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Early Modern Art History
- 26/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Public Health Policy
- 27/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Marketing
- 28/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Applied Development Psychology
- 29/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Qualitative Inquiry
- 30/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Translational Obstetrics
- 31/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Molecular Microbiology and Global Health
- 32/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Translational Liver Research
- 33/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Farm Animal Health and Production
- 34/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Transplant Surgery
- 35/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Clinical and Experimental Surgery
- 36/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Preclinical Ultrasound
- 37/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Developmental Haematology
- 38/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Melanoma Genetics and Drug Discovery
- 39/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Medicinal Chemistry
- 40/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Veterinary Immunology and Infectious Diseases
- 41/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Parasite and Mitochondrial Biology
- 42/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Patterned Parallel Computing
- 43/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Human Geography and Cultural Studies

- 44/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Experimental Nuclear Physics
- 45/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Cryosphere-Atmosphere Interactions
- 46/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Astrostatistics
- 47/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Computational Language Learning
- 48/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Epigenetics and Developmental Biology
- 49/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Atmospheric Chemistry
- 50/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Microbial Geochemistry
- 51/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Asymptotics and Special Functions
- 52/2018 Foundation of a Special Chair of Machine Learning
- 53/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Civil Engineering Design
- 54/2018 Foundation of a Personal Chair of Ocean Engineering
- 55/2018 Foundation of a Chair of Renewable Energy Technologies
- 56/2018 Foundation of a Chair of Genomic Medicine

2 Report of the Academic Standing Committee

for the General Council meeting on 9 June 2018

Convener of the Academic Standing Committee: Professor Stephen Hillier

The Academic Standing Committee (ASC) works to stay aware of relevant educational issues in order to feed back support and advice to the General Council Business Committee (GCBC) for onward transmission to the University Court.

The ASC has met four times this session. The first meeting prioritised business for this academic session, and the second focussed on the Student Experience around Teaching & Learning. These meetings were reported in the Convener's Reports in Annex, Winter 2018.

The third meeting (8 February 2018) of ASC received a report by the Director of Student Wellbeing, Mr Andy Shanks. Mr Shanks profiled (1) the scale and impact of **Mental Health** issues among students including the special needs of international students, (2) the depth and breadth of current student service provision, including student support at School level, (3) student counselling provision and (4) the student disability service. ASC heard how student support is to become part of the new **Service Excellence Programme**, which aims to promote and share best practice across all Schools. A further meeting with Mr Shanks is planned for later this session, to hear progress being made in these critical areas of student support and provision.

The fourth meeting held on 24 April 2018, focused on **Widening Participation**. Ms Tracey Slaven (Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning) and Dr Katrina Castle (Head of Widening Participation) updated ASC on progress with the Widening Participation and Pathways to the Professions programmes, and showcased new measures to broaden access to the University to young people and individuals from all walks of life.

Overall, the ASC is impressed by the efforts being made to increase student access to the University and ensure that the services and support available to students while they are here are second to none.

3 Report of the Constitutional Standing Committee

for the General Council meeting on 9 June 2018

Convener of the Constitutional Standing Committee: Professor David Munro

In the session 2017-18 the Constitutional Standing Committee has continued to keep a watching brief on 'Brexit' negotiations and their impact on the University. Final comments were made on the Scottish Higher Education Code of Good Governance review prior to a final document coming out in November 2017. The focus of the committee since then has been on the new appointment process for General Council representatives on the University Court prompted by the Scottish Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. In January, Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services gave the committee a presentation on the new appointment process which was approved in principle by the Business Committee and subsequently by the General Council at its Half-yearly meeting in February 2018. Following the receipt of amendments to relevant University Court Ordinances, the committee will proceed to address changes that require to be made to the General Council constitutional arrangements and regulations.

4 Report of the Finance and Services Standing Committee

for the General Council meeting on 9 June 2018

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

The Committee has held just one meeting on which I can report since the February 2018 meeting of the General Council. On 8 March members met Mr Richard Kington, the University's Director of Accommodation, Catering and Events (ACE) to discuss in particular the provision by the University of accommodation for students. The scale of ACE's activities is impressive. Employing almost 800 staff (529 of them full time), the department's forecast income in the current academic year is some £73 million, making it the largest operation of its type in the UK. A significant proportion of ACE's income is generated from its commercial activities, which help make it an important net contributor to Edinburgh University's overall finances.

The University guarantees to house all undergraduate students from outside the Edinburgh area in their first year and also aims to house the majority of postgraduate students (excluding postgraduate taught home and EU students, a gap in provision it is working to fill): 85% of first year undergraduates go into University accommodation. Altogether the University houses over 10,000 students, as well as providing temporary accommodation for visitors to Edinburgh during vacations. A number of commercial providers supplements this provision of accommodation for students, in the city. Edinburgh First, the catering part of the operation, has 18 catering outlets across the University and provides a catering business to 100 plus University buildings.

In discussion with Mr Kington, the Committee explored the process for allocating students to the accommodation available and assisting them to cope with the transition to university life, including building the relationships that will sustain them during their time in Edinburgh. Members were impressed by the care that goes into this and to providing students who are found to be struggling with support and advice, whether financial or personal. As regards expanding the facilities available, the University has plans to add a further 1,000 – 1,500 beds to the current number.

Mr Kington concluded his conversation with the Committee by inviting members to visit the relatively new student residences in Holyrood Road: 11 members of the Business Committee were pleased to accept his invitation on the afternoon of 3 May. The visit underlined the imaginative approach, which ACE is taking to its task, which includes the opening of some catering facilities to

the public as well as students. The discussion in the Business Committee following this visit underlined the Committee's intention to take a continuing interest in this important aspect of University life.

The Committee's final meeting of the current academic year will take place on 7 June (too late to be included in this report) when it will meet Professor Andy Kerr, Director of the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation (ECCI), to discuss the University's sustainability agenda and how this impacts service provision across the University.

5 Report of the Public Affairs Standing Committee

for the General Council Meeting on 9 June 2018

Convener of the Public Affairs Standing Committee: Ms Sophie Marshall

The Public Affairs Standing Committee (PASC) has continued its programme of work for the 2017-18 session, with its remit remaining focused on reputational issues impacting the university and alumni engagement through publicising and arranging events for the General Council.

Our current programme of work has centred on student wellbeing, this has been a key theme spanning across all of the Standing Committees, and PASC has specifically examined the issue of accessibility at the University.

In January, Professor Jane Norman, Vice-Principal People and Culture, presented the key findings and recommendations of the Disability Review. There were notable positive findings, such as the mainstreaming of adjustments, however, Professor Norman remarked on some of the challenges of the estate and the management of accessibility issues. This item is to remain on PASC's agenda as it was agreed by all members that this is an area that must be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure there is continued progress.

Latterly in the session we have considered both the General Council and the University's approach to alumni engagement and have recently heard from Grant Spence, Director of Alumni Relations. Members were delighted to hear about the international reach of the alumni network and the continued drive to involve alumni in the work of the University, both at home and abroad. PASC also learnt about the work of the University in engaging alumni through a Planetary Health Pledge – this excellent initiative looks for alumni to make a commitment that will help to improve our planet's sustainability. If you are interested in signing up then please do so here: <https://www.wear donation.com/businesses/the-university-of-edinburgh/leaderboards/edinburgh-alumni-planetary-health-commitment/>.

In the next session we hope to continue to build our links with Alumni Relations and also to examine the issue of transport, which we have received representations from the EUSA sabbatical officers, as an area of some contention. We have recently been pleased to learn from the Principal's Open Letter reflecting on his first 80 days at the University that he is developing integrated strategies for accommodation and transport. On the latter he reported constructive discussions with the City Council leadership.

We have also been busy arranging future events for the General Council but firstly, it would be remiss of me not to mention the Half Yearly Meeting that took place on Saturday 24th February. The meeting was held in the recently renovated McEwan Hall and members heard from the inspirational, Mr JJ Chalmers. Looking ahead to the future, we have our next Half Yearly Meeting

on Saturday 9th June and this will take place at Appleton Tower, George Square and includes a tour of the Main Library. Having our meetings across different parts of the University estate has been popular with alumni and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the students and staff who assist us with these events and allow the General Council to have insights into the various different aspects of university life. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible – tickets are available here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/general-council-half-yearly-meeting-9-june-2018-tickets-442184234>

6 Meetings of the Business Committee

The Committee has met once since its last published Report, viz. 3 May 2018

Papers from the General Council Meeting on 24 February 2018

A Presentation of the Annual Report of the University at the General Council Meeting on 24 February 2018

Vice-Principal: Professor Charlie Jeffery

Vice-Principal: Thank you very much Rector. Fantastic to be here at this meeting of the General Council. I think I'm what is known as the warm up act and I'm sure you'll be very keen to hear from the new Principal, Peter Mathieson. We did think it was perhaps a little unfair to ask Peter, who is a very new arrival, to look back at the year 16/17, so that's why I'm here today. I'm going to follow, broadly speaking, the approach that Tim O'Shea has taken in the past but I'll probably run through it a little bit quicker as I'm sure you'll want to hear from Peter.

I have a few slides to begin with that are about the composition of the student body. This one shows our head count which is now nudging 40,000. 13% of our students from other EEU member states. The academic year 16/17 was very shortly after the referendum; we might not have expected too many effects. But just moving forward beyond the period of this report, it's good to note we haven't seen damaging effects on the recruitment of students from the EEU. In fact, they've nudged up slightly in the latest intake. I think that's the story across the board really of the impact of BREXIT. That it has led to our engagement with the EU increasing. I think that says something about this University. We are now no. 1 University in the UK for incoming and outgoing students on the ERASMUS programme. Since the referendum we have seen a net increase in EU staff numbers of about 250. And we've seen our applications and income from EU research grants increase significantly. I think that says something about how the University has offered reassurance to those already here who may have had concerns about BREXIT, but also those students and staff who are thinking of coming here, and I'm very pleased we've got this far. Who knows what the future will hold.

Level of study by College, you will see there the split between undergraduate/postgraduate taught students and postgraduate research students. I won't comment too much, except to note that we still are about 2/3 undergraduate in the make-up of our student body. Which is somewhat distinctive among the world's leading universities and I think says something about the

commitment of the University to a very strong undergraduate student experience alongside the outstanding research distinction that we had.

Domiciles on entry, students outside the UK. What we say there, is that China has unambiguously overtaken the United States. They have been neck and neck in the last few years; China has moved ahead. While we are still the number one recruiter of US students in the UK. So we have a very strong global profile as represented in these top two lines but also what you see below. The only real concern, I think, is India. I think that India numbers should, in effect be, as big as the Chinese number given the links of language and history that we have. And this is an issue that we've raised with the UK government on a number of occasions to advise them to change the tone of the immigration discussion in the UK which has dissuaded students, particularly from India but also from other parts of the world, from coming. We have heard recently that the number of visa applications for Indian students to come to the UK has been growing. The restriction there appears to have been relaxed which can only be a good thing. The final point to note about the make-up of our student body is about gender. We are a majority female university and that majority is growing. On the one hand that's fantastic when you think of where we were a couple of decades ago when we were very much male dominated. Perhaps what we have to focus on in the future is attracting more young men to come to this university. Especially young men from disadvantaged backgrounds where we have a really significant deficit. This may be something you will notice both in the activities of the university in the coming years and its future years.

The next set of slides records all of the professors appointed to the University in the year 16/17. There's lots of them so I'm not going to dwell long on each one but I'm picking out the odd person who I think is especially noteworthy but also emblematic of some of the things the University's passionate about. The first one here is a colleague Alison Koslowski in the school of Social and Political Science, appointed to a personal Chair last year at a relatively early-career stage, and you'll hear about her next year when she'll be on the list of Chancellor's Award holders for outstanding teaching; that's fantastic. This is a bright, relatively early-career, colleague who actually has a very significant physical disability. That level of achievement, notwithstanding disability, says something both about her and about how the University nurtures all of its talents.

I'll dwell for a moment on Geoff Simm, Professor of Global Agriculture and Food Security. Geoff is leading our work in re-establishing agriculture as a specialism of this University, developing, what will be in due course, a School alongside the Vet School out at Easter Bush. But it's not agriculture as we may have known it, this is high tech agriculture which is the focus of this work with a very strong emphasis on animal genetics and a very strong emphasis on what has been known as the agriculture internet of things. Interconnected sensor devices which help us understand how to maximise productivity in crops and in animals. I found myself talking with mock confidence about things like oestrus in pigs. Pigs in heat basically., We are world leaders in pigs in heat using sensor technology to identify the best possible moment of insemination which can have an extremely significant impact in the productivity of breeding pigs.

College of Science and Engineering, David Aspinall, a Professor of software safety and security, or cybersecurity. Many achievements in that field including our recognition of the national Centre for Cyber Security, a UK wide network. Extraordinarily important, in one level in terms of national security, but also in terms of financial institutions, and every institution, because as digital technology has become more pervasive, their resilience and security becomes all the more important and I'm delighted that we're at the forefront of that field.

EUSA Teaching Awards. A fixture in the annual cycle of important meetings of the University, the Teaching Awards evening. I've picked out one here, the Best Course Award delivered by Chris Breward and Nikki Moran from Edinburgh College of Art. Chris Breward, a Vice-Principal of the University and the Head of the College of Art, winning a prize for teaching. That says something about the shift in emphasis in the University. A senior leader like that is giving such commitment to teaching and to his students. Sadly he's left the University now to become Director at the National Galleries, so a great loss for us but a fantastic example to set. We have awards for best overall teaching in Medicine, Vet Medicine, Science and Engineering and Humanities and Social Science. Outstanding colleagues all. And I should say just how sought after these prizes have become. If you get one of these prizes it really is career highlight. It gets a very prominent place in the CV and it gets a very prominent place in promotion applications as well. I should acknowledge the role of the Student's Association in designing and leading this awards process. It has been a fantastic achievement on their part.

University Awards. Chancellor's Awards are given at the annual dinner where the Chancellor attends at Holyrood Palace. Lesley McAra and Susan McVie, an award for the impact of their research. These are an utterly formidable duo working on Youth Criminal Justice, looking at pathways into and out of crime of young people especially in disadvantaged areas. The prize was recognising the latter part out of crime. They have had extraordinary impact in opening up life chances for younger people who might have in earlier times thrown them away through the path that they have taken. Lesley McAra is also our Assistant Principal External Relations and projecting that kind of commitment into the relations with the communities around us is a big advantage for us.

Moving on, Principal's Medals. I've picked out Amy Woodgate who was very much at the heart of our work in delivering our capacity to do MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). Now you would have heard Tim O'Shea in the past, and Jeff Haywood before him, about the vision that they had and the leadership that they gave to it. We are one of the universities in the world that has the highest reach around the world due to its online presence. We wouldn't be where we are without the work that Amy did to establish the technologies to mobilise the academics to give us that reach so I am very pleased she won that award.

Tam Dalyell prize for Excellence in Engaging the Public in Science: Jon Oberlander. I'm extraordinarily sad that Jon passed away last December. A brilliant science communicator and I guess some of you were at the celebration of his life that we had in the Playfair Library which I think was the biggest ever attendance we have had in the Playfair Library. We were way over capacity. 200 seats I estimate another 300 people standing at the back of the room recognising a brilliant achievement.

Moving on to the Queens' Honours. I picked out Kathleen Hood who won an MBE for her work in Widening Participation in higher education. If any of you recall Kathleen you will recall the deep passion and commitment that she had to opening up opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. So it was wonderful to see that recognition. I also highlight Harriet who is on that list. I will also say something about Harriet's work, which has been extraordinary in establishing this University as a welcoming multi-faith environment. That is something that we may underestimate because it is extremely important for the well-being and the experience of

many of our students. So I would like to thank Harriet for that and to note the very well merited award with a round of applause.

Colin Adams was the driving force in the commercialisation of our research in informatics, leading a business accelerator body informatics ventures for about a decade. It is no coincidence that within that decade this city emerged as the second most important centre for tech entrepreneurship in the UK after London. Lots of people contributed to that but I think I can safely say that we wouldn't be such a big centre for tech entrepreneurship in Edinburgh had Colin not played that role. It was wonderful to see that recognised.

We've had some very prominent recognition of research, a Nobel prize winner associated with the University, our local Nobel prize winner continuing to pick up additional recognition, Peter Higgs. I wanted to pick out John Savill. He has retired in the last few months as Head of the College of Medicine and Vet Medicine and has been an extraordinary leader in that College for 15 years or so. He can be awarded in all sorts of ways for that outstanding leadership, but it's wonderful to see a recognition here of John, the outstanding researcher in his field of kidney Medicine. Andy Hein has won a very significant award for the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. I wanted to pick him out in particular because he is one of our Chancellor's Fellows. Our Chancellor's Fellows programme is a programme of investment in outstanding early career researchers from around the world to give the leaders of tomorrow. What is really significant is that we've got nearly 300 of them now across the University. They are fulfilling that mission, they are becoming leaders and they are doing research of such distinction that it doesn't just win grants and outstanding publications, it gets that kind of recognition. Our Chancellor's Fellows are often among our most innovative teachers taking that leadership role extremely seriously.

We have a lot of honorary graduates in this year. The first one Joshua Littlejohn, a very well-known figure, locally, for his visionary work in the development of support for homeless people; support both in terms of establishing roots into employment but also routes into sufficient housing with a number of very significant initiatives in this city. A lot of that has been driven, supported and funded by these very prominent mass sleep out exercises. I hope the new Principal realises that he is required to rough sleep once a year!

Helga Nowotny an outstanding researcher from ETH in Zurich who became the Head of the European Research Council. An important win of EU research funding which runs the best individual research fellowship programme in the world. The highest levels of competition, really strong commitment to peer reviewed to identify excellence, so only really brilliant people get these. And that's something that this University has worked extremely well, we're among the top handful of universities across the EU for getting awards from the European research Council for achieving at that high level of distinction in the world's best programme. And it was very right for us to recognise Helga's work in establishing that commitment to excellence.

Financial Review we have £929M income and we're heading swiftly towards being a £BN institution. This is one of the most significant enterprises in Scotland by some way. The research distinction of the University is being perpetuated because our research grant success at a time of shrinking public funding for research is going up.

In the Annual Review document we have a month by month account of the year. August 2016 the opening sound and light spectacular of the Edinburgh International Festival very much driven by

colleagues in the school of Informatics. Moving on to December launching a new climate strategy to be zero carbon, carbon neutral by 2040. We are a university which is growing in turnover and estate. We are producing more carbon. So this is a vision for a growing institution to deal with one of the significant challenges of the age through its own actions. It's a very commendable initiative. February, Festival of Creative Learning. This is a week cleared of routine teaching to give a space for academic staff to experiment in their teaching and to think of new and exciting ways of conveying their subjects. Often doing it in experiments in co-design with students. It's now a fixed point of the academic year and something which is really driving on our capacities in learning and teaching. Finally, in May, we beat Glasgow in the boat race!

Also in the Annual Review we have a number of key stories of activities and events throughout that year. Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal is one. We had an agreement in principle to fund that deal last July. In Principle the biggest single element of funding is about the application of data technologies for the benefit of both private enterprise and the public sector. We can generate a benefit from public investment which repays back 8.5 times over. Because we have that kind of experience from people like Colin Adams at how to take new ideas into the economy and because we think we can work with public organisations to make the way they work and the way in which they deliver public service to citizens better than it is now. In due course once we have a final agreement we'll see a programme of investment in buildings and data infrastructure which we think will make this place the data capital of Europe, the most significant centre for data technologies in Europe. A fantastic opportunity for the University.

The next thing I want to pick out is a student led initiative. This is one of my favourite groups of students, the Hyper Loop society, which has around 200 members from a range of schools, especially Engineering and Business. They are working on a new transport technology, which consists of building tubes, which have vacuums inside, and shifting passenger pods within them at unimaginable speeds, which would link Edinburgh and London in 45 minutes. This is something that Elon Musk the prominent tech entrepreneur has been promoting through establishing a global competition and our team has been in the finals in 2 years in a row.

The McEwan Hall restoration has been an extraordinarily successful renovation. The basement is now a fantastic space for events and activities for the University, at graduation and beyond. One of the most significant aspects of that is the way that our alumni community was mobilised to give support through subscription and as marked by the bricks outside in the corridor which notes that contribution. This was a fantastic collective enterprise of the University community.

Conclusion: the University is performing strongly in various ways. I pointed to the excellence of our research, and we have a very diverse student body and we have a really clear and strengthening commitment to make sure that that student body has as outstanding an experience as it can. We have no ill effects from BREXIT yet as we are still unclear as to where we will end up. My betting is on a relatively sensible outcome, a relatively pragmatic outcome, which I think will leave us with a significant degree of continuity in the way that BREXIT impacts on higher education. We have good relationships with Scottish and UK governments. The City Deal is one aspect of that; it's a co-funded programme by both, but in various other ways I think the relationships are strong. I have to note also that while these are governments led by a particular political party that party may well lose an election at some time, so it is also important to make sure we are on good terms with those currently in opposition which we also see as a priority. The City deal opens up a new chapter

and I will be able to say more about this when we have this meeting next year. I think it is going to be a very significant moment.

One final thing to note. We have also managed to recruit an outstanding new Principal. Which takes us on to the next agenda item.

Rector: Thank you very much Charlie. I would now like to invite Peter Mathieson to the lectern. I met Peter during the interview process that was very comprehensive, and Peter had heard that there were some issues around student experience and so he decided to carry out his own research and stopped students in the street around the University, asking them what they thought of their experience in Edinburgh. So I'm very pleased to welcome a very active and dynamic new Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh University. Peter.

Principal and Vice-Chancellor: Professor Peter Mathieson

Principal: Thank you very much Steve. So, just a caveat to that story. On one of the visits to Edinburgh I was on my own and on that visit my sample was very definitely more male than female because I didn't want to get arrested. But on the other visits I was with my wife and, almost without exception, the students that we walked up to uninvited assumed we were the parents of a prospective student, thinking about where we wanted to send our son or daughter to university. So we didn't mislead anybody but we didn't remove that impression because it was quite convenient. The students were extraordinarily forthcoming and so it was a great source of information.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to address the General Council. I'd like to thank Charlie for presenting the previous report of the University which was extraordinarily positive and I hope you get the sense that the University is in a really good place. For me who is the incoming Principal, to come to a university that is in that condition is an enormous privilege, much appreciated by me and of no credit to me whatsoever. To have Charlie to set the scene like that was great and is a tribute to Tim and Charlie and Sarah and everybody else who has got the University to this point and I'm very much conscious that my job is, first and foremost, not to screw it up! I will try and do that.

My intention is to give you a few words of introduction about myself, my wife Tina, say a little bit about the first impressions of the University of Edinburgh that I've managed to form over the years before I got directly involved. Obviously I'm very aware of the University but I've got a bit more interested over the last year and a half. I'm at a disadvantage, everybody in this room knows the University better than I do so all I can really comment on is my impressions as an outsider, the principles and the experience I bring from some of my previous jobs, some lessons learned and I hope some exciting areas that we might talk about in the future.

Before I forget I want to comment on three things about Charlie's presentation. The first thing I wanted to say is that it's really nice to get the opportunity to publically thank Charlie and Sarah, in particular, who have done a magnificent job on behalf of the University in the last thirteen months because it's thirteen months since I was offered the job. It's a very long time. And in that thirteen months the two of them have used excellent judgement over when to tell me something or involve me in something and when not to. Because I still had a big job to do in Hong Kong and I appreciated not being expected to start doing the next job before I finished the previous one. But

they have been extremely good at keeping me informed, involving me when it was appropriate to be involved and just keeping me up to speed on some of the issues that would affect my tenure. I should also say that Tim O'Shea was very gracious in his attitude as well. He was willing for me to be involved even before I'd actually taken up the job and whilst he was still in post. So I'm very grateful to all of them for that. On Charlie's presentation, I learned something this morning. I did not know that I am the Principal of a university that is a world expert on pigs in heat. So thank you very much for that piece of information. The other slide that really struck me was 'Top 20 UK Domicile on Entry' and it shows the extraordinary international range of student recruitment to the University of Edinburgh and it shows the disproportionately large bars at the top representing China and the US. I'm looking at Chris Cox, because what I see when I look at this slide is an army of alumni all over the world, including in China and the United States. These are currently students but it won't be long before they become alumni and the members of the General Council, ambassadors for the University. This is an illustration of the global power of the University because you have recruits from all over the world, very interesting parts of the world: China, of which I have some recent experience, United States, which is, at least at the moment, the foremost economic power in the world, plus a range of other countries. This is a very significant illustration of the current status of the University also of its future potential. That's the kind of thing I want to build on and capitalise on as it's symbolically very important.

Who is Peter Mathieson? What can I tell you? I went to school in Cornwall, ten miles from Land's End, so Penzance is the last major town when you travel south west, with sea on three sides. We lived in a very remote part of Cornwall, a very long way from anywhere else and I didn't like it much. I only really appreciated Cornwall when I went to university and London and I suddenly realised that having a home in Cornwall was an advantage. The reason we ended up in Cornwall was an accident of my father's premature death. My father was a merchant naval seaman with Trinity House, an organisation which used to put people on and off lighthouses and lightships in the days when lighthouses were manned, and, as a result of his work we moved very frequently. He was on stations which were roughly three years at a time. So I was born in Colchester and when I was less than year old we moved to Swansea and I lived there for about three years, and then we moved to Penzance when he was First Officer on a ship called The Stella. He would have been posted to another posting, probably as the Captain of a Trinity House ship had he lived longer than he did, but he died when I was seven years old and so we stayed in Penzance. We would not have stayed there if it hadn't been for that event. And so I went to school in Penzance. I'm not Cornish. You have to live there for three or four generations before you're considered Cornish but Cornwall is about as close as I've got to an identity as in that's where I was brought up and went to school. I have a surname that my accent does not deserve, although I have ancestry and my father was brought up in Edinburgh. I have three striking memories of him. One of which is nothing to do with Scotland. He did not want me and my brother to go to sea. He'd spent a lot of his life away from home and did not want his sons to follow him. At least in that we've honoured his wishes. There is one standing on the bridge at Eilean Donan Castle, Loch Duich. The Mathiesons were never important enough to own their own castle but they were the wardens of Eilean Donan for the Macraes. And my father stood on that bridge and he said to my brother and I "this is where it all started 650 years ago. This is where the Mathiesons come from". That's a very important memory for me and I've been back several times. It's a very iconic picture often used on the BBC to illustrate Scotland and it illustrated my family roots which are very important to me. The second memory of him is standing on Edinburgh Castle surveying the city and saying, "this is where I came from". Every time I walk through the city of Edinburgh and look up at the castle I think of my father and hope that he would be proud to think I'm now the Principal of the

University in his home town. That's the sentimental aspect of the Mathieson origins and what it means to me.

I often say that every single good thing that's happened in my life is the result of education. I can say that even if my wife is in the audience because I met her at university. Tina is an orthodontist. We met at the London hospital where I was doing medicine and she was doing dentistry. We've got two children, a son and a daughter. My son is married and they've recently given us our first grandchild. I now have a grandson who incidentally is called William Mathieson, which is the same name as my father, which is also rather nice, sentimentally. He's now 10 months old. This week I went to London for an event for a meeting with universities UK. At the very last minute Tina decided to come with me. Not to keep me company but she wanted to go and visit the grandson. So I didn't see her for three days whilst in London!

As you've heard this is a fantastic time for the University of Edinburgh. I think the University is in great shape for the next stage of its development and I'm very honoured and privileged to be part of that. And I want to make sure that I contribute as much as I can to continuing that fantastic track record. We're almost touching 40,000 students and getting close to a £1BN turnover so it's a very significant organisation. It accounts for 25% of higher education in Scotland, so the other 18 universities account for the other 75% between them. So we have a big civic, national and international responsibility to fulfil. The City Deal, which Charlie mentioned, fills me with optimism. It's a very good example of the University capitalising on its strengths. This University is extraordinarily good at data science. That's known all over the world. It's one of the things that accounts for the University's international reputation and here's an opportunity to capitalise from that. Get some money from the UK and Scottish government but also promote our interaction with the city and local councils and build on our interactions with industry in a way universities need to do in order to remain relevant and City Deal gives us a great opportunity. The City Deal itself is exciting but the potential of other things it might lead to is even more exciting. Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate affairs in the University, was telling us this week that other entities such as the airport authority PWC are coming to the University and asking to get involved. So proactive interaction with other components that previously might not have been directly working with the University, or felt that we were particularly approachable. This City Deal illustrates the power of the University's engagement with its community and I think that's really important. Charlie and others have led that piece of work magnificently.

The event I was in London for was to receive the Queens' Anniversary prize on behalf of the University and I was thrilled as I'd only been here for two and a half weeks. It was awarded to Jane Norman and colleagues in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and the subject of the work was a whole series of initiatives in women's health going from pregnancy, prevention and complications to menstrual disorders, to pregnancy related disorders, to menopausal disease and female cancers. So right across the spectrum of women's health. The group in Edinburgh have done some magnificent work. This was thirty years work coming to fruition with societal impact and that's exactly what's expected for a Queen's Anniversary prize. We were amongst 31 further and higher education institutions to receive such an award and I had the privilege of collecting it from Prince Charles having met his sister earlier in the morning as she's going to be my colleague as the Chancellor. And so that was a fantastic privilege for me and another example of the great position the University of Edinburgh is currently in. We picked up this very prestigious award which is akin to a civic honour. It's like a knighthood for a research group if you like, that's very

much the spirit in which it was awarded. And so I was very proud to be picking that up on behalf of the University.

The research income Charlie mentioned. As I understand it, the University had record research income last year and in the year to date. This year is already ahead of last year. So that momentum and that profile of continued research improvement is really staggering. It means almost certainly there is going to come a year when it goes down. It can't go up forever. And if the Finance Director was here he would smile because at the Court meeting I pointed out that there are two undeniable truths about higher education which not everybody appreciates. That is that research actually loses money despite being the main determinant of a university's international reputation and is something we all take pride in and want the research income to grow, it does not pay for the bills. Those running costs are largely served by teaching and other activities of the university. Teaching subsidises research. This is central to my thinking of the way a comprehensive university should be managed and should be run and should plan for the future.

What about the challenges? I'm not an expert on BREXIT but it clearly poses challenges to universities in the UK and it's not just about recruitment of staff and students and implications about tuition fees, it's also about research funding, profile and strategy. One possible silver lining of BREXIT is that if universities like this one realise and capitalise on their potential in other parts of the world beyond Europe, and I see Asia as an area where we should build on our current activities, this is where the economic power is developing. We need to be clear about understanding the risks but also the opportunities and we need to think very carefully about our strategy in China and other parts of Asia but there are fantastic opportunities there. We have 3000 students from China currently who can be assets for us in terms of understanding what we should do with China in the future. The other continent I'm currently obsessed with is Africa. I've spent some very happy and productive times teaching in East Africa and I'm very excited that this University is a member of the Mastercard scheme which brings bright African graduates here and also encourages them to go back to their country after their studies to continue their development of their origins so it's a very worthwhile scheme. Engaging with Africa has its risks and its benefits. The statistics I like about Africa is that of the next 3 billion people born on this planet, 2 billion of them will be in Africa. So it's an extraordinary population explosion happening in Africa which has implications for health and technology. Data science can help Africa deal with that population explosion. So there are many ways this University might productively engage with Africa and I'm very keen to lend my weight to make that work for both parties.

I used to describe the University of Hong Kong as being intermediate between a British and an American university in its attitude and success with alumni relations. American universities have a very successful and complex machinery for alumni relations and for fundraising and philanthropic giving. British universities are not as well developed, in that sense. How do we engage with these alumni all over the world? Personally I think that should start even before they become students. Most alumni will not be in a position to be philanthropic givers at least in the early part of their careers but they can do so much to help the university before they reach that point. It's about mentorship and internships in businesses and being contact points, critical friends in Edinburgh and further afield. I'd like to see a lot of development in alumni relationships and I know a lot of work is going into that. About 10% of the annual income in HK (around £800M) is through philanthropic income, much higher than any British university. You learned that if you don't ask you don't get and I'd like to bring some of that here. How should universities articulate their value to society? The City Deal gives us an opportunity to do that. At a recent Russell group meeting the

conclusion was that universities are not very good at it. We tend to be comfortable in our own world, we think we're doing great things, but what about demonstrating value for money? We are a public organisation, we also receive tuition income from parents and students who have made sacrifices for their education and we're increasingly being called upon to demonstrate value for money and that's a challenge to universities. We need to think how we articulate our value to society. It's not just about educating students. About 50% of school leavers will go into tertiary education. What of the other 50%? What do we mean to them, to their quality of life, to their world? How can we demonstrate value to people who don't go to university? That's an important challenge because we do have the privilege of receiving some of the brightest and most capable school leavers and staff but there is also a part of society that never directly engages with the university and we have to serve them too.

I'm confident that the university is investing in aspects of student experience which aims to try and improve the student satisfaction scores which are discordant with the standing and the excellence of the University. This is something we have to pay attention to and something I care about. I also care about widening participation. I came from a widening participation background myself and I attribute everything good that's happened to me to my opportunities to go to university, and I want to bring those opportunities to other people. That's my goal if you like. But if it were easy to solve it would have been solved long ago. Many people are working very hard to try to understand the issue and try to improve it and I'll join that battle because it's something I passionately believe in, if only for feeling grateful for the opportunities that I was myself given.

It's too early for me to comment on a specific aspect of the University of Edinburgh that needs to be changed or not but I don't foresee the need for any major structural reorganisation. I've long been an admirer of the Scottish College model. I think it works well in Edinburgh. It's a model that's much admired by me and others around the higher education world and I don't see any reason to change it. There may be a slight shift in cultural emphasis between teaching and research and maybe the cultural pendulum has been tipped a little bit too much towards research in the past and certainly in the minds of some of the staff who think the only way they can progress their careers is by research achievement and everything else in secondary. We need to also prize excellence in teaching, knowledge exchange and the various other things that the University aims to deliver for our staff because that's very much the mission of a modern research intensive university.

The third aspect of university function that doesn't get talked about too much is knowledge exchange. A bi-directional exchange with society: knowledge coming into the university and also going out. The University of Hong Kong had a project designed for experiential learning for its students. It takes place in a rural part of China, mountainous, populated by ethnic minorities and very poor. The engineering faculty at the University of Hong Kong sent students to speak to the local communities to offer help and built a series of schools. A lot of Hong Kong students were very suspicious of China but one first year engineering student went and learned two things. Firstly, he realised that the people he was working with were all Chinese like him and secondly he felt empowered that he had some knowledge that he could bring to their benefit. He'd never realised that before. This is an example of the way universities sometimes underestimate their ability to contribute to society. Secondly the net benefit was a personal one and unmeasurable. This is a nice example of the value of knowledge exchange and experiential learning and something I'd like to see further developed for our students.

I'd like to thank you for all that you've done for the University in the past, for all that you currently do and all that you will do in the future. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you at this very early stage of my time here and I look forward to working with everybody that loves and cares about the University of Edinburgh and to enhance its status even above the lofty level that it currently sits. I regard that as a big responsibility and a big privilege and I'm delighted to be here. Thank you very much.

Rector: Thank you Peter. In the last 15 minutes of Mike's reign I remind you that I do have to close this meeting at 12.30 because of all the recreational catering arrangements, but Peter has very kindly welcomed you to ask any questions so this is your opportunity to put any questions to our new Principal.

Ritchie Walker, BSc 1968, currently General Council Assessor on the University Court. This is maybe a bit unfair Principal. I really wanted to ask you if you can advise the present company how soon we might see resolution of some of the action taken by University staff throughout the country and maybe comments on recent claims by the students for refund of fees.

Principal: Not unfair at all, in fact this is the issue that has probably dominated my thoughts the most in my first three weeks in office. I would have preferred not to deal with an industrial dispute in my first few weeks in office but I didn't have any control over that. I was at meetings of Universities UK, which is acting as the employer's organisation in a national collective bargaining discussion together with UCU (Universities and Colleges Union) which is the workers representatives in this issue. The current status is that there is a mood amongst UUK members, including me and including a number of very like-minded universities, that we must be proactive in trying to seek a resolution. There has been a discussion. There has been a vote of the joint negotiating committee where the casting vote of the Chairman was deployed in favour of the employer's position, so as far as that joint negotiating committee is concerned that work is done. That decision has been conveyed to the pension's regulator and there is a consultation period due to start in three or four weeks' time on the proposals which have been agreed. That sounds as if the train has already left the station. But there is a very strong mood which we share that we don't want to be passive about it, we want to proactively try to seek resolution. There is a feeling that the UCU, the trade union, is looking for compromise and perhaps the positions, as often happens in these disputes, have become very entrenched. But, actually, a gesture of some sort from the employers seeking new discussions and new agreements might be quite timely and just last night that gesture was made. So Universities UK invited the UCU to more talks on Tuesday to discuss the future of the pension scheme.

So the underlying issue is some proposed changes to the pension scheme which has been a source of anxiety for many of you, the growing gap between the scheme being able to deliver its benefits and the current levels of accrual. This is not a new problem but things have seemed to come to a head in the last few months whereby the pension's regulator has said to the employers this situation is not sustainable and if you don't do something about it, we will. So the employers feel they are very much under time pressure to produce a solution. A solution has been proposed. UCU did not accept that solution and there was an impasse at the negotiating committee. So the question really that's dominated the discussions is what's on offer? What can we really afford? What would be sustainable? What is in the best interest of the staff and the universities? And you'll appreciate there's some discordance of view among universities about that. Some universities want to be more generous than others. Some are in a position to be more generous

than others. We're fortunate our finances are strong. But there are plenty members of UUK who are terrified of the financial implications of increased pension contributions. And at the meeting I was at, more than one university Vice-Chancellor was saying "if we have to pay more pension contributions that means less salary for everybody else. So there'll be job losses and pay restraints and so it may favour this particular group of staff but will have consequences for others. And that message is being strongly led by some of the smaller, less economically powerful universities. So the challenge to UUK which represents a diverse group of universities is somehow to come to a compromise position. The mood around the negotiating table is very strong and we're part of that and that's now beginning to happen. What I don't know is how productive that will be. The strikes in Edinburgh are due to start on Monday, delayed by innovative Learning Week. I haven't heard whether UCU have accepted this invitation but if they do there will be a meeting on Tuesday. I don't know what that implication will have for the strikes here. At the moment we don't know how much impact the strikes will have. There are very detailed contingency plans to try to mitigate the effects of the strike.

The last point you made was about students asking for refunds. Every day since I've been here I've been inundated with emails from students making this point: I've paid for my education, if I'm not going to get my tuition I demand a refund. The University is, first of all, taking the attitude that we don't yet know how much disruption there is going to be so we can't start compensating for something we can't quantify yet. We're making every effort to reduce the impact of the strike and if there is teaching which doesn't happen we've made a pledge that students will not be examined on things they're not taught. We've also made a number of specific suggestions to both students and staff about things that can be done to mitigate the effects of the strike. At the moment it's unresolved but there's definitely a spirit of wanting to get back to the negotiating table and we've added our voice to that.

Rector: Thank you very much. Another question?

Peter du Vink, BComm, 1966: We have seen recently that the satisfaction of Edinburgh students is not quite as high as the University deserves. Can you give us a bit more about your research, particularly what you want to do in order to get the students to be happier.

Principal: My research was deeply unscientific: flawed methodology presented as a research project as a way to combat jetlag. It was a dipping of the finger into the water to see if I could get some specific pieces of information to deal with. The general message was very similar to every other measure of student satisfaction that this and other universities undertake. The things that upset students most are aspects of communication, aspects of catering and accommodation, aspects of transport, things around assessment and feedback, these are very well known themes. In the National Student Survey, which is one of the measures of student satisfaction there are categories for all these things. The University of Edinburgh does pretty well, 80%+ of students are very satisfied. It's just that if you look at it as a league table, most other universities are higher than that. That's the challenge. Most businesses would be very pleased with an 80% rate of satisfaction but as judged by the NSS, that's not good enough because other universities do better.

The main aim in the first year or so in the job is to try to understand this discordance that we see. When I asked students if they were having a good time their immediate answer was "yes". Would you recommend it to your friends? Yes. So then I say "why are you not satisfied?" And then you get all these lists of the various issues. The city is a fabulous place to be a student. The University

has great credentials and great reputation. We need to understand the discordance between what they actually say when they fill out surveys about student satisfaction and the opportunities that the city offers them. People love coming to Edinburgh but they love it because of the city and they don't necessarily appreciate all the things the University contributes to that student experience. We need to understand why that is and if there are specific things we can attend to. This is a bit of an oil tanker it takes time for satisfaction surveys to improve. But we need to understand it first. And my aim from talking to as many students as I can and indeed as many staff, alumni and other stakeholders is to begin with an understanding of the issues and try and think about what we need to address.

Kirsty MacGregor, MA, 1981: You have spoken to my question which was outreach internationally and relational internally. The sense of belonging to an institution which is expanding incredibly fast, and some of the mental health problems, some of the issues seem to be around this whole relational aspect of the need to belong to a very large institution.

Principal: The sense of identity and the sense of belonging and the sense of someone knowing you is a very important part of student satisfaction. This is a very big university, it's grown and it's geographically dispersed across the city. Those things all make the creation of a sense of identity more difficult. It's not impossible but you have to pay specific attention towards creating a sense of identity. One of the many Skype calls and interactions I've done with bits of the University over the last 12 months or so was with the School of Nursing. It's a small School with a very tight professional identity whose student satisfaction scores are high. They have the advantage that this sense of belonging is inherent while doing a nursing degree. Edinburgh happens to be the home of nursing degrees. There is no question in my mind that creating this sense of identity and allowing people to feel that even though they are part of this very large, very dispersed organisation, someone knows them and cares about them; that will go some way to addressing some of the issues.

Roger Windsor, 1965, Veterinary Medicine: My question to the new Principal is to ask for his support. I spent most of my working life in Africa and South America. About 30 years ago I tried desperately to stop the University from closing down the centre for Tropical Vet Medicine at Easter Bush. Recently I've been talking to Professor Argyll and I understand that there's been a move to bring back the centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine which had a wonderful reputation and did a great deal of good for Britain and for Edinburgh University. So I would like to ask the new Principal for his support for opening up once again this centre.

Principal: One of my central principles is I will never promise something that I'm not certain I can deliver. I don't know anything about that particular centre and I don't know anything about the issues that you highlight. What I will say is I do believe that a university like this one should and can contribute to the developing world and to tropical regions of the world. There's all sorts of reasons for doing so. I think we can improve ourselves and our understanding of the world and our ability to function by engaging with other parts of the world that are less fortunate than ourselves. So working in tropical health, whether its veterinary medicine or human medicine, I absolutely approve of. Whether we do it by the creation or the recreation of a centre, I just don't know enough about the issue. But certainly the principle that we should be working with far flung parts of the world, I completely agree with you.

The following questions were emailed to the Principal's Office prior to the meeting and were answered with a written response

David Houston – 1976, PhD, Science and Engineering, 1987 MBA Business Administration

“The University has enjoyed a period of considerable expansion under your predecessor. EUSA are saying that both academic and pastoral support of students has suffered in some schools as a result. This is despite the improvement programme already under the supervision of the Senior Vice-Principal. What are your thoughts on the future rate of expansion and ensuring students receive the support they deserve at a university of Edinburgh's calibre?”

Response

Court and our new Principal have emphasised clearly the importance of the student experience and substantial investments have been initiated in student facing facilities from study space to a new Well-Being Centre and in the Sports master plan.

Size of institution does not prevent a positive student experience. However, it does add to the complexity of managing competing demands and we need to actively consider how we effectively engage students in those conversations.

Philip Gaskell

FRCGP MB ChB (1976)

general practitioner locum

“I asked a question of the GC a couple of years ago about widening participation access to medical school places. It seems appropriate to follow that up now as the retiring Principal has publicly supported this for all subjects - and the new Principal has a medical background. This seems especially important with the shortage of general practitioners in Scotland (and the UK), a trend which will take some years to reverse?”

Questions:

- The Widening Participation projects are laudable and professional - but has the GC and Principals a perspective on the impact they have had - or none?
- There is evidence that denigration of general practice and practitioners by medical teachers (consultants) has some impact on the choice of speciality/discipline made by medical graduates (after Foundation Years). Perhaps Professor Peter Mathieson would comment on that?

Regarding Q1, I have recently been in contact with Mr Brian Cherry (Undergraduate Admissions Manager) who kindly responded to an FOI request and a further query.

I asked him about these admission figures stated as admitted to EU medical school via the assistance projects:

2010 – 16

2011 – 20
2012 – 17
2013 – 15
2014 – 23
2015 – 16
2016 – 19

No obvious (or statistically significant) difference year on year.

Mr Cherry's response:

As to Edinburgh's recruitment via the various Widening Participation projects, this has remained fairly static over the past several years despite increases in the offer rate to eligible students. We believe that a significant factor in this is the methodology used by the Scottish Government to measure deprivation which results in a significant underestimation of the levels of social disadvantage in Lothian and Borders as compared to similar postcode areas in the West Coast and North East <http://simd.scot/2016/#/simd2016/BTTTTFTT/9/-4.0000/55.9000/>.

An additional factor is likely to be the trend whereby WP applicants prefer universities closer to home, resulting in our offer-holders from the pockets of deprivation around Glasgow and Dundee opting for those Medical Schools over others.

We are aware of the complexity of issues and are working with the other Medical Schools and Universities Scotland to come up with a sector-wide approach that will capture potential doctors in these areas at a far earlier stage. Our long-term goal is to implant the belief that Medicine is a career open to all with the required qualities and then provide support during the pre-application and application phases to help this become reality.

I (and my wife who is even more familiar with deprivation methodology) have doubts whether this explanation holds water and wonder if the impact question requires further exploration?

Thank you"

Response

We are fully committed to addressing widening participation across the university and that applies to Medicine as much as to any other subject.

The access programmes to Medicine are well established and provide a supportive and effective route for those young people who have identified medicine as their vocation early in their school career. However, we recognise that to improve the diversity we need to find routes into medicine for those who start to aspire to the career as they leave school or indeed when established in other related careers. We are actively exploring options with Scottish Government – medicine is a controlled subject with entry and overall places strictly limited.

In relation to General Practice, it remains the largest single specialism for graduates from our medical school.

Post completion of their MBChBs, graduates apply for Foundation training places within the NHS. This process is managed at UK level and places are only available in specialisms where the NHS has need. As part of our normal curriculum development we are currently working to increase substantially the amount of time in community based practice within our medical programmes. We have a robust "Dignity and Respect Programme" operating in the Medical School which addresses denigration, whether intentional or not, of any particular career choice.

Grant Campbell - 1966, MA (Hons) Politics and Modern History

"In the light of the recent reports, including ones produced by Police Scotland, which noted 41 offences of violence, including attempted murder and 55 sexual offences which took place in recent years on the Meadows, what is the University doing to address the problem of personal security in the Meadows? Does it believe that it could do any more to improve the current situation, including putting in additional financial resources to support the relevant public bodies?"

Response

We thank Mr Campbell for his question and take extremely seriously the safety of our students in Edinburgh.

To clarify that the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links is owned by the city and the Council liaises closely with community councils and groups bordering the park to manage the space and with Police Scotland to ensure public safety.

The FOI figures from Police Scotland, which Mr Campbell has shared with us, relate to a wide area which stretches from the Pleasance to Tollcross and from the Grange to Lauriston Place, so much wider than what would be considered The Meadows/Bruntsfield Links. As we understand it from the official bodies the levels of violence within the boundaries of the park are considerably lower than suggested.

The University wishes students to be safe wherever they are in the city and our Security Team liaises closely with Police Scotland on such matters. The Team gives crime prevention talks during Welcome Week, which reach 80% of new students and delivers other talks throughout the year. The Students' Association provides safety information, including Police Scotland advice, to all students via The Advice Place offices in Potterrow and King's Buildings and through its website and social media channels.

The University works with partner organisations in the city on a wide range of matters and has a Good Neighbour Forum – which includes representatives of the University, the Students Association, the Council and the Police. The issue of student safety falls within its remit and we are open to considering any initiative which might enhance safety.

We are arranging a meeting with Mr Campbell and look forward to further discussion of the matter.

B Presentation of the Report of the Business Committee

at the General Council Meeting on 24 February 2018

Convener of the Business Committee: Professor Stuart Macpherson

Rector, Principal, Senior Vice-Principal, Colleagues and members of the General Council

On behalf of the members of the General Council present this morning and the 220,000 members across the world who cannot be with us can I start by expressing a very warm welcome to our new Principal, Professor Peter Mathieson. As we are aware, Peter has spent the last few years as Vice-Chancellor and President of The University of Hong Kong. He tells me that he is a keen walker and in Edinburgh already enjoys walking from home to Old College. This was impossible in Hong Kong as for most of the year the humidity would have meant arriving in his office in a socially unpleasant state. We can assure him that humidity of that nature will not be an issue in Edinburgh!

The high point of General Council activity over the past months was a reception for and presentation to Sir Timothy O'Shea to mark his 15 very successful years at the helm of the University. At Sir Tim's request, monies collected from General Council members were donated to the O'Shea Global Scholars' initiative. Sir Tim had been very supportive of the General Council and we felt it appropriate to also arrange a personal gift for himself and Lady O'Shea. For this, we commissioned a piece of engraved glass art created by General Council member Alison Kinnaird. Alison's glass engraving is rightly famous and is displayed in collections across the world. She produced a quite magnificent engraving depicting Old College. For members who have not seen the piece a photograph of it can be viewed on the General Council website.

We have recently been in detailed, but I am pleased to say harmonious, discussions with the University regarding the implementation of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. Amongst other provisions this removed the requirement for the governing body of the ancient Scottish Universities to include positions for General Council members. In our case this means there is now no statutory requirement for General Council Court Assessors. However our University has made it very clear that they wish General Council members to continue on Court. I am very grateful to the University for taking this attitude but also to present and past General Council Court Assessors whose contributions to the management of the University have been informed, appropriate and much appreciated. These discussions have resulted in the motion to be presented later in this meeting which I commend to you and which I trust you will approve.

Last autumn the Business Committee's first task was the setting of objectives for the session. This followed an informal meeting with the current officers of the Edinburgh University Student Association. I consider it important that we make ourselves aware of the issues exercising students and that these are borne in mind when agreeing our priorities. We agreed objectives under four headings. Firstly, the student experience encompassing teaching and learning in particular teaching quality, the Personal Tutor system and the teaching/research balance. Secondly student wellbeing especially mental health and counselling, transport, ensuring accessibility and housing. Then – Outreach – paying particular attention to widening access and integrating the student community. Finally constitutional change including the General Council changes I have already referred to and leaving the European Union.

Our four Standing Committees then take these objectives and plan their meetings accordingly.

Professor Steve Hillier's Academic Standing Committee held a formal meeting with senior officers from EUSA and recently met with the newly appointed Director of Student Wellbeing, Mr Andy Shanks.

Professor David Munro's Constitutional Standing Committee has been closely involved with the change to our Court Assessors. They met with Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services, to finalise the arrangements I have described. Professor Munro also keeps a watching brief on the implications of Brexit and will arrange meetings as facts become clearer.

Sir Philip Mawer's Finance and Services Standing Committee held its annual meeting with Phil McNaull, the University Director of Finance on 24th January. Mr McNaull reported another successful year for the University and Sir Philip particularly noted highlights as a 10% year on year rise in research grants and the award of £9.7 million through undergraduate bursary schemes. The expenditure on capital schemes continues apace with plans to spend £200 million over the next ten years on schemes designed to improve the experience of students. The Committee also noted the University's major involvement in the forthcoming Edinburgh City Deal.

I am pleased to report that Ms Sophie Marshall has accepted the chair of the Public Affairs Standing Committee. They met with Professor Jane Norman, Vice Principal People and Culture to discuss her Disability Review. The Committee endorsed the recommendations pertaining to both the implementation of adjustments and the accessibility of the estate. They appreciate that these improvements will take some time before they are fully in place and intend to keep the subject on their agenda.

At this point, I would like to thank the four chairs of our Standing Committees for their work and the senior University personnel who always respond so willingly to our requests for presentations and discussions.

I am delighted that the present members of the Business Committee are so diligent in their attendance and so interested in University activities. In addition we have a membership with diverse backgrounds and experience and a very good equality and diversity balance. I believe this is reflected in the fact that we had so many splendid people standing for the vacant positions in this year's elections. All would have been worthwhile additions to our number and I hope that those who were not successful will retain their interest and we can find a way in the future to involve them.

I believe it is very important that the General Council is represented at official University functions such as graduations, St Giles services and the Remembrance event. Business Committee members have fulfilled these responsibilities enthusiastically and I am happy to report that in the past year we have not missed one. As the previous Principal said in thanks to us, sometimes he found it was only the General Council supporting him walking down the High Street on a wet Sunday morning. I thank Business Committee members for their commitment.

I now need to close on a sad note. Dr Mike Mitchell is stepping down from his position as Secretary of the General Council. I must explain the significance of this. Mike is the secretary of the General Council and therefore Secretary of the Business Committee. He has repeatedly explained to me that

I am simply the Convener of the Business Committee and not the Convener of the General Council. The secretaryship of the General Council is misnamed. The position is in reality the Chief Executive of the General Council. The Secretary organises everything and Mike has carried through this role in an exemplary fashion. I am sure the previous Conveners he has worked with would agree with me that they would have floundered without Mike there to direct them. His experience of the University, his knowledge of its people, his background history of the General Council are extensive and his interpersonal skills outstanding. I have no doubt that this meeting will want to thank Mike for his twelve years of service to the Business Committee, his past chairing of the Public Affairs Standing Committee and his seven years as Secretary.

My surgical background trained me not to panic when the way ahead looked challenging, however I did panic when Mike announced that he was stepping down! However again demonstrating the popularity of the General Council in this University, we received three fully qualified applications for the post. Any of the three would have put my mind at rest but we come later in the agenda to the appointment we would like you to approve.

Rector that completes my report.