Billet

WINTER 2019

including election information
Welcome to Billet winter 2019

We hope you enjoy this issue, which contains information about the February 2019 General Council Meeting, forthcoming election and the Half-Yearly Meeting in June.

The General Council provides graduates with a continuing voice in the management of the University’s affairs, and every graduate automatically becomes a member. Academic staff and members of the University’s governing body, the University Court, are also members of the General Council. It meets twice a year and has the right to comment on matters affecting the University’s prosperity and wellbeing. For more information, visit https://www.general-council.ed.ac.uk

Front cover and below: new students take part in the University’s Welcome Week icebreaker event in the Old College Quad.

Report

by Professor Stuart Macpherson
Convener of the Business Committee of the General Council

An excellent Half-Yearly Meeting of the General Council was held on 9 June 2018. The occasion began with a reception in the newly refurbished Appleton Tower followed by interesting presentations from Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University, and Jeremy Upton, Head of Library and University Collections. General Council members then moved to the University Main Library building and in smaller groups enjoyed guided tours of departments within the Library including the Exhibition Gallery, the Centre for Research Collections and the Treasures room.

Our new Secretary, Professor Ann Smyth, spent the summer months acclimatizing herself to her role and reports on some planned developments in this issue. Individual Standing Committee chairs met with the Edinburgh University Student Association leaders appropriate to their areas of responsibility. Following these discussions and consultation with members of their Standing Committees, programmes of meetings with appropriate senior University staff are being drawn up for the coming session.

This represents a development of process from previous years when the agenda was formulated for the Business Committee as a whole. This change has been brought about to recognise the fact that the majority of our work is carried out in Standing Committees which then, through their chairs, report their findings to every meeting of the Business Committee.

It is our intention to review other aspects of Business Committee procedures in the coming year. One important consideration will be to discuss whether a Standing Committee for International Affairs would be a valuable addition, given the increasingly global engagement of the University’s work.

This autumn we have welcomed our four new members to the Business Committee and they have been allocated to their Standing Committees. I am delighted to have their knowledge and experience available to us and can report that they have already taken a constructive part in our discussions. We will have further vacancies available in the coming months and I would strongly encourage any General Council member who is interested in the development of their University to seriously consider putting their name forward. If anyone would like to consider participation, either now or in the future, I would be more than happy to meet with them to explain the Business Committee’s activities (email macphersonsg@gmail.com).
This report is much shorter than usual because I am not reporting on the Standing Committees’ work and future plans. To reflect the fact that significant work is carried out in Standing Committee I have asked the respective chairs to report directly to Billet rather than, as was previous practice, through myself. Therefore their four reports now follow.

Reports by the Conveners of the Standing Committees:

Academic Standing Committee
The Academic Standing Committee work plan for this session addresses contemporary issues relating to student wellbeing and satisfaction. The emphasis is on Mental Health, Curriculum Diversity, and Equality and Liberation. These areas have been prioritised in consultation with elected representatives of the student community. International dimensions will receive particular attention. The overall objective is to understand how these important issues are being tackled so that the Business Committee can support the University in promoting an optimal teaching and learning environment.

Professor Stephen Hillier
Convener

Constitutional Standing Committee
The Constitutional Standing Committee held its first meeting of the Session on 18 October 2018. In open session, it heard from Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services, on changes to the University’s Ordinances, particularly those affecting the composition of the University Court. In the subsequent discussion, Dr Allan answered questions and responded to comments made by those members of the Business Committee present. In closed session, the Constitutional Standing Committee agreed its work plan for the year ahead, which will focus on reviewing and updating the Constitutional Arrangements of the General Council and its Business Committee, last updated in 2011. This will take into account not only the changes to the composition of Court occasioned by recent legislation and changes to University Ordinances, but also issues relating to processes and procedures raised by members of the Business Committee. The Constitutional Standing Committee will also continue to keep a watching brief on the implications of Brexit on the University.

Professor David Munro
Convener

Finance and Services Standing Committee
In the autumn 2018 the Finance and Services Standing Committee will have two meetings. In the first, the Committee will seek to understand the scope of City Region Deal and the University’s involvement and commitment in terms of money and resource, how the challenging targets will be met and what the legacy will be to the University. Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services, and Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice-Principal, will give a presentation to address these points and then respond to further questions.

In the second meeting, the retiring Director of Finance, Phil McNaull, will give his thoughts on the key challenges that the University faces in the coming years. This will be instructive as the committee move into the spring 2019 with new Director of Finance reviewing the Annual Accounts, the Human Resources Director addressing staff recruitment and training along with pensions and finally the Estates Director on the challenges he faces delivering the ambitious development programme across the large estate.

Mr Jock Millican
Convener

Public Affairs Standing Committee
This academic year sees another packed agenda for the Public Affairs Standing Committee. The key themes of our work will include reviewing the integration and engagement of the University into and with the local community; assessing how the University communicates with alumni and looking specifically at how the General Council can better communicate with its membership, and we will also be considering the cost of student living, with a focus on affordable housing and transport. Broadly, we want to look at the impact of the student experience, both from a student perspective but also how this interlinks with the communities we serve around Edinburgh and how we the University can continue to improve upon this.

Ms Sophie Marshall
Convener

Report from the Secretary of the General Council

EASE
The University’s system for secure access to its electronic systems, called EASE, can be problematic for alumni who graduated before lifelong access to University systems was the norm. EASE can be experienced as a barrier to online voting in our elections and to engagement in other University initiatives for alumni. I have therefore been working with colleagues in Information Services, Development and Alumni, and Communications and Marketing to find a solution.

This winter we are piloting personalised support for the subset of General Council members who still request printed Billet and/or paper ballot forms. We hope this will enable them to vote and access alumni resources online. I would strongly encourage
those who receive personalised support in their mailing please to try out access via EASE, since this is going to be increasingly important as the way to connect for General Council members in future.

We are also aware of difficulties in using EASE for General Council members who have had more than one University identity, for example as a graduate and staff member. We will be attempting to address those issues in the next phase of this work.

Communications issues

The University and the General Council Office take data protection very seriously and we have spent considerable time ensuring that we are fully compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulations. We apologise if it has caused irritation to members that we have to ask again for particulars or permissions which they have given previously.

We have been looking at ways to make our communication with members through the General Council website more dynamic, for example, including video material or brief news reports from the many interesting presentations we have to the Standing Committees. We are also trying to signpost from our website other events or opportunities in the University of potential interest to our members. Communication is a two-way process and we are always interested to hear from you about University related matters, in the General Council Office.

Professor Ann Smyth

Edinburgh, June 2018

The General Council Half-Yearly Meeting took place on Saturday 9 June in the Appleton Tower, Crichton Street, Edinburgh. During the buffet lunch members viewed displays of some current Student Experience Grant projects (formerly known as Innovation Initiative Grants) carried out by staff and students, including the Palma Soap initiative to tackle malaria; a small scale social enterprise project with a big impact.

The new Rector, Ann Henderson, chaired the formal business meeting which included a report from the Convener, Professor Stuart MacPherson, who gave a summary of the recent activity of the Business Committee. Thereafter, the formal presentations on the history of the Library through to a vision of its future, and innovations in digital learning and technology were recorded by lecture capture technology and can be viewed at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/video/hymedinburgh-9-june-2018.

The meeting was followed by a visit to the Main Library where participants divided into smaller groups to be shown round the Centre for Research Collections and the

Library’s modern facilities for exhibiting researching, conserving and digitising the University’s heritage collections. This informative and lively afternoon event created opportunities to meet and engage with a number of leading library personnel and users, seeing their work and finding out how much study and curation has moved on.

A videographer recorded highlights of the day, including feedback from participants, which can be viewed at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/video/hymedinburgh-9-june-2018-library-visit.

Some feedback from the day:

“What a superb group of events: excellent lunch, interesting meeting, interesting speakers and, of course, the outstanding tour of the library.”
The General Council Meeting, 16 February 2019

The February 2019 General Council Half-Yearly Meeting will be held in the newly refurbished Law School in the Old College Quad. Before the meeting there will be an opportunity to see some of the significant renovations that have transformed this building. If you would like to join the tour, please contact the General Council Office by 31 January 2019. The formal meeting begins at 10.30am. The Principal, Professor Peter Mathieson, will present the Annual Report from the University. The event will be live-streamed. Given the proximity to Brexit we have particularly invited the University’s alumni clubs in Europe to engage with us online for this occasion including submitting questions to the Principal.

The event can be viewed live online via the media section of the General Council website, www.general-council.ed.ac.uk, by clicking the webcast tab.

Further details and papers appear on page 13.

The General Council Lunch

Following the Half-Yearly Meeting on Saturday 16 February 2019, members of the General Council, alumni, partners, family and friends are cordially invited to the General Council Lunch in the Playfair Library.

We look forward to welcoming our after-lunch speaker Professor John W Cairns, Professor of Civil Law at the University, who will give what promises to be a fascinating account of the history of the Old College Quad.

Professor John W Cairns’ research has mainly focused on the history of Scots law (particularly legal literature, legal education, and the legal profession in the 18th century) slavery and the law (specifically in the 18th century), and the legal history of Louisiana and Quebec. He is especially interested in the influence of Smithian historical thinking on the development of academic legal education in Scotland. He is a graduate of the University and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

If you would like to attend the next General Council Lunch, please book online by following the link at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening, or complete and return the form on page 19 no later than Thursday 7 February 2019.

Tickets at £23 include pre-lunch wine reception and a buffet lunch in the Playfair Library Hall. Table wines will be available to purchase.

The General Council Meeting, 15 June 2019

The University and Africa: Past, present and future

The General Council Half-Yearly Meeting will be held in the morning of Saturday, 15 June 2019, in the McEwan Hall. This will be followed by presentations and a panel discussion to highlight the range of the University’s engagement with Africa and some of the key contemporary issues. An informal buffet lunch will give participants the opportunity to move around this splendid space engaging with an array of exhibits and events, which will run in parallel, with the opportunity to talk with staff and students from across the University who are engaged in these projects. The closing session will look to the future and opportunities for interested alumni to remain engaged with developments in this area.
General Council election, February 2019

Candidates for Members of the Business Committee

The following nominations have been received for the election of five members of the Business Committee to serve from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2023. The names of the candidates appear in randomly drawn order.

Dr Edward Bruce Ritson, MBChB 1961, MD 1967
Proposed by Professor Stuart Macpherson, OBE, MBChB, FRCS, FRCP, FRCGP
Seconded by Professor Ann Smyth, BSc, MPhil (ClinPsychol), PhD

Relevant experience: mental health consultation, teaching at the University and collaborative international research with the World Health Organization. Service on Business Committee and previously as Convener of its Academic sub-committee.

These experiences have revealed the importance of prioritising quality, valuing diversity and ensuring the wellbeing of undergraduates, postgraduates and staff.

Ms Moyra Elizabeth Mackenzie Forrest, MA 1970
Proposed by Professor Stuart Macpherson, OBE, MBChB, FRCS, FRCP, FRCGP
Seconded by Mr Gordon Cairns, LLB 1979

A retired research librarian and city councillor, I am interested particularly in the opportunities for the University from the City Region Deal. I am seeking second term on the Business Committee as I value its role as a critical friend to the University – especially in turbulent times.

Lady Joyce Ethel Caplan, BEd 1967
Proposed by Mr John Clifford, MSc 1990
Seconded by Mr Gordon Cairns, LLB 1979

President of Friends of Edinburgh University Library, Trustee of Scottish Pen, Chair of Poetry Association of Scotland. I have taught English Literature at the University for 25 years and am committed to maximising students’ learning opportunities within the University framework.

I Chair, and have Chaired, several Scottish non-government organisations.

Ms Sophie Elizabeth Marshall, MA 2012
Proposed by Miss Sophie McCallum, MA 2009, MSC 2012
Seconded by Ms Judith Drake, MA 2014, MSC 2016

As a passionate advocate for the accessibility of education, I will continue to examine the physical and societal barriers that exist, and push for a diverse and open university. I will also ensure the University prioritises student and staff welfare to ensure it remains a creative environment cultivating new ideas.

Mr Laurentiu Florin Prodan, MINF 2012
Proposed by Ms Pia-Maria Bododea, MA 2015
Seconded by Mr Patric Manual Fulop, BSc 2014

My strengths lie primarily in business and finance, and I would like to use my skills to ensure that as many people as possible can feel transformed by their university experience. The world is evolving at an exponential pace and I hope to contribute new ideas to the Committee’s activity.

Mr John Gilbert Millican, BSc 1973
Proposed by Professor Stuart Macpherson, OBE, MBChB, FRCS, FRCP, FRCGP
Seconded by Mr Gordon Cairns, LLB 1979

My wide experience in business and sport coupled with a desire to contribute to the University has allowed me to make a strong contribution to the Business Committee. I believe that I can continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that we contribute effectively.

Voting in the General Council Election

This is the opportunity for you to participate in the governance of the University by voting for members of the Business Committee of the General Council, who are responsible for much of its work.

In February 2012 the General Council introduced online voting on a secure website, the Elections channel of the MyEd Alumni Portal, which will be open from Monday 7 January 2019 until 17.00 GMT on Tuesday 12 February 2019. In order to vote you must register via the EASE registration process as explained below by 17.00 GMT on Monday 11 February 2019 at the latest.

Voting papers are only enclosed where members have specifically requested them previously, no later than 21 November 2018, and should be completed and returned in the enclosed addressed envelope to the Secretary of the General Council.
Papers for the General Council Half-Yearly Meeting

On Saturday 16 February 2019 in the Law School, Old College

9.30am–10.15am: Tour of the newly refurbished Law School
10am: Coffee, tea and biscuits in the MacLaren Stuart Room (G.159)
10.30am–12.30pm: General Council Meeting in Lecture Theatre 1.264
After the meeting: Lunch in Playfair Library (see page 19 for details)

Details of how to view the event live online are given on page 8. Members are invited to submit questions to the meeting by email to generalcouncilquestions@hotmail.co.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the General Council Meeting

1. Results of the Elections for five Members of the General Council Business Committee.
2. Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council held in the Appleton Tower, Crichton Street, Edinburgh, on Saturday 9 June 2018 (Paper A).
7. Presentation by Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the Annual Report to the University.
8. Any other competent business.

Paper A

Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council held in the Appleton Tower, Crichton Street, Edinburgh, on Saturday 9 June 2018.

Present

Ms Ann Henderson Rector
Rev Dr Harriet Harris Chaplain of the University
Ms Sarah Smith Secretary of the University
Professor Ann Smyth Secretary of the General Council
Professor Stuart Macpherson Convener of the Business Committee
54 Present

of all candidates appear on pages 10–11. Anyone still wishing to vote by post may do so for subsequent elections by requesting a postal vote from the General Council Office before 22 November in the year prior to any election.

To be able to vote online you need to be a member of the General Council eligible to vote in this election and registered through EASE as a MyEd Alumni Portal user. Those who registered for previous elections do not need to do so again, simply use the same user name and password. If you have already used the Portal as a student, you should still be able to use your student username and password to access the Alumni Portal. If you are a new user you will need to contact the support service. To do this send an email to the Information Services helpline at IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk requesting access to MyEd and giving your full name, date of and degree awarded at first graduation from Edinburgh. A username and initial password will then be sent to you. If you experience problems at any point when registering for, or accessing, the Alumni Portal, please also contact Information Services at the above address, identifying yourself by matriculation number (if known), full name, year and degree awarded at first graduation from Edinburgh.
1. Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council held in Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, Edinburgh, on 24 February 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2018 were approved.

2. Matters arising

The Chairman reported that there were no matters arising from the Minutes.

3. Report of the Business Committee

The Convener began by welcoming the new Rector, Ann Henderson, to her first General Council Meeting. Members heard about the successful Half-Yearly Meeting which had taken place in February in the magnificent surroundings of the newly refurbished McEwan Hall and where the General Council were also pleased to welcome the incoming Principal, Professor Peter Mathieson. As the Principal was newly in post at the time of the meeting, Senior Vice-Principal Charlie Jeffery gave the Annual Report of the University to members present, with the Principal instead giving an account of his early views of the University and some thoughts on its future development.

Two very important motions were passed by the meeting: the appointment of Professor Ann Smyth to the position of Secretary of the General Council and the new appointment process for General Council Assessors to the University Court.

The inspiring after-lunch address was given by alumnus John James Chalmers, who sustained devastating injuries in a bomb blast while serving with the Royal Marines in Afghanistan and yet went on to pursue a successful career in television.

The Business Committee had met to discuss the strike action taken by University staff in opposition to proposed changes to the USS pension scheme. This was supported by students, despite some disruption to their timetable, and the Principal continues to monitor the dispute which is not fully resolved.

As is usual the majority of the General Council’s work took place at subcommittee level.

The Finance and Services Standing Committee enjoyed a tour of the new student residences in Holyrood Road and met with the Executive Director of the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation (ECCI) who gave a fascinating insight into the University’s progress on its sustainability agenda: the University aims to become a zero carbon institution by 2040.

The Public Affairs Standing Committee learned about the launch of a pioneering new software – Platform One – which will allow locally based alumni to offer mentoring skills and advice to current undergraduates.

The Academic Standing Committee focused on the University’s Widening Access programme and had a second meeting with the Director of Student Wellbeing for an update on the provision for mental health support for staff and students.

Finally, the Convener thanked the members whose term of office had come to a close for their commitment to the Business Committee. There had been a strong response to the request for new members and the Convener introduced those who were successful in the elections.

The report of the Business Committee was approved.

The full text of the Convener’s remarks are contained in the Annex to the Billet.

4. Dates of future meetings of the General Council

The next Half-Yearly Meeting would take place on Saturday, 16 February 2019, at the Law School, Old College, Edinburgh. Any Motions for discussion at this meeting should be received in the General Council Office by the 21 November 2018. The following Statutory Half-Yearly Meeting would be held on Saturday 15 June 2019, in the McEwan Hall, Bristo Square, Edinburgh and any Motions for discussion at this meeting should be received in the General Council Office by Wednesday 27 March 2019.

5. Notice of forthcoming elections

There will be an election for five Members of the Business Committee in February 2019. Nominations on forms available from the General Council Office and on the website should be received in the General Council Office by the 21 November 2018.

6. Any other competent business

There was no other competent business.

7. Adjournment

The Motion by the Convener of the Business Committee that, for the purpose of considering matters which may be transmitted to the General Council by the University Court or any other business of a competent nature, the Business Committee be empowered to act on behalf of the Council, and that this meeting be adjourned to a date to be fixed by the Business Committee, was approved.

The Annex to the Billet, containing supporting papers for the Agenda, including communications from the University Court, full Standing Committee reports and the Business Committee’s report to the meeting on 9 June 2018, are available on the website at: www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media (Publications). General Council members may also request it by post from:
Ms Alison MacLeary,
General Council Office,
Charles Stewart House,
9–16 Chambers Street,
Edinburgh EH1 1HT
T: +44 (0)131 650 2152;
E: general.council@ed.ac.uk

Or pick a copy up at the location of the General Council Meeting from half-an-hour beforehand.

8. Scrolling through time
Presentations by Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University, and Jeremy Upton, Director of the Library and University Collections. The presentations were followed by a tour of the Library.

A text sculpture by Turner Prize-nominated artist Nathan Coley, The Basic Material is not the Word but the Letter, in the University Main Library.

 Officers
Chairman: HRH The Princess Royal
Secretary: Ann Smyth BSc, MPhil (ClinPsychol), PhD 2022
Registrar: Sarah Smith, University Secretary ex-officio

General Council Assessors on the University Court
Doreen Davidson, BA, AIPD 2021
Dr Alan D G Brown, MBChB, FRCOG, FRCSEd 2019
Ritchie Walker, MA, BSc, DipEd 2019

Business Committee
Convener: Stuart Macpherson, OBE, MBChB, FRCS, FRCP, FRCGP 2020
Vice Convener: Gordon D Cairns, LLB 2020
A Convener of Academic Standing Committee: Stephen Hillier, OBE, DSc 2020
C Convener of Constitutional Standing Committee: David M Munro, MBE, BSc, PhD 2020
F Convener of Finance and Services Standing Committee: Mr Jock Millican, BSc, FCILT 2019
P Convener of Public Affairs Standing Committee: Sophie Marshall, MA 2019

Members
Chancellor’s Assessor: Sheriff Principal Edward F Bowen, CBE, TD, QC ex officio
P Moyra Forrest, DL, MA, MCLIP 2019
P Kristin Hannesdóttir, BArch(Hons), BA, MFA 2019
P Bruce Ritson, OBE, MD, FRCPE, FRCPsych 2019
A Briana Pegado, MA 2020
C Krystyna Szumelukowa, BA Hon: M.Phil: MRTPI 2020
F Kirsty MacGregor, MA, MBA, DipEd 2020
F Hamish McKenzie, MA 2020
A Professor Andrew Miller, CBE D.Univ, FRSE. 2021
A Ms Judith Drake, MA, MSc 2021
C Rt Rev Brian Smith, MA, MLitt 2021
P John Clifford, MSc 2021
C David Houston, BSc, MBA, PhD, FSITM 2022
The February 2019 General Council Lunch

Booking Form

Playfair Library Hall on Saturday 16 February 2019, 12.30pm for 1pm

Please send me ______ tickets (£23 each)

A cheque for £_______ is enclosed payable to The University of Edinburgh.

Name ..........................................................................................................................

Address ....................................................................................................................... 

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Name(s) of guest(s) .....................................................................................................

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Dietary requirements/preferences ............................................................................

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Year of graduation and subject of study ...................................................................

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Please return to: Ms Alison MacLeary
Assistant to the Secretary of the General Council
The University of Edinburgh
Charles Stewart House
9–16 Chambers Street
Edinburgh EH1 1HT
Scotland, UK

Alternatively, book online at: www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/whats-happening

Closing date for applications: Thursday 7 February 2019

A Ario Santini, MD, PhD, DipFMed, BDS, DDS, FDS, FFGDP, DGDP, FADM. 2022
C Candice Donnelly, LLB (Hons), Dip LP, NP, WS 2022
F Arron Ashton, BSc 2022
F William Duncan, BSc, PhD, CIPD 2022

Assistant to the Secretary: Alison MacLeary, MA

‘A’ denotes a member of the Academic Standing Committee
‘C’ a member of the Constitutional Standing Committee
‘F’ a member of the Finance and Services Standing Committee
‘P’ a member of the Public Affairs Standing Committee.