Billet WINTER 2021

including election information
I write this, my first report as Convener, as Edinburgh and the rest of the UK appear to be facing the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The virus has, of course, wreaked havoc wherever it has struck, deeply affecting the lives of individuals and institutions, including that of the University of Edinburgh. Doctors, scientists and many others, educated or still working at the University, are at the forefront of the international response to the pandemic. The pressure on staff and students – whether living in Edinburgh or elsewhere around the globe – has been and continues to be intense, as they fight to protect the future while continuing to ensure that the University delivers world-class teaching and research.

Amid rapidly changing circumstances, the General Council and its Business Committee have also adapted their working practices. Sadly, the Half-Yearly Meeting scheduled for June 2020 had to be cancelled but we are pressing on with plans for the next meeting, on 6 February 2021, to be held online. At that meeting, the Principal of the University, Professor Peter Mathieson, will give the General Council his annual report on the state of the University. We can expect it to be a report like no other in recent times. The University has rarely needed the support of all members of the General Council more and I urge all members who can do so to register to hear his address.

The Business Committee too has had to take its meetings and those of its Standing Committees online. Along with Gordon Cairns – who I am delighted has been re-appointed as Vice-Convener of the Business Committee – I am very grateful for the way in which members of the Committee, and not least the hard-working Conveners of its Standing Committees, have adapted to this new way of transacting business. Most of all, our thanks go to Ann Smyth, the Secretary of the General Council, and her Assistant, Alison MacLeary, for successfully masterminding this transition.

As the 2020/21 session has opened, we have been far from idle. In July we gained an important student perspective on the impact of Covid-19 from the newly elected President of the Edinburgh University Students’ Association, Ellen MacRae. In September, the Principal himself gave the Business Committee a masterly overview of the University’s situation and answered questions from members. Meanwhile we were able to induct the newly elected members of the Committee into its work and the work of the Standing Committees to which they have been assigned, and to plan the vital work of those Committees. That work has become even more important in
the circumstances of the pandemic, as we seek to understand, to support and to engage constructively with the University in its many different aspects, on behalf of all alumni.

By the middle of October, each of the Standing Committees had met at least once and their plans for the rest of the year were well-advanced. Among the issues already addressed:

- the Academic Standing Committee under Professor Steve Hillier had discussed the impact of the pandemic on the student learning experience;
- the Finance and Services Standing Committee, chaired by Dr William Duncan, had discussed the implications for the University’s substantial estate and its related capital investment programme with the interim Director of Estates;
- the International Standing Committee, led by Krystyna Szumelukowa, had considered the changing shape of the University’s international engagement with the Vice-Principal International;
- and the Public Affairs Standing Committee, under its new Convener, Candice Donnelly, had reviewed with the University’s Director of Communications and Marketing the implications of the pandemic for the University’s developing communications strategy.

You will find more detailed information about the work and future plans of the Standing Committees in this edition of *Billet*. The willingness of hard-pressed University staff, including the Principal, to set aside precious time to engage with representatives of the General Council is deeply encouraging as I take on my new role, and a sign of how seriously the views and potential contribution of all General Council members are taken by members of the University Executive.

That this is so owes a great deal to my predecessor as Convener, Professor Stuart Macpherson OBE. Having previously enjoyed a very distinguished career as a renal surgeon and in medical education, and after serving on various medical and governmental committees across Scotland and more widely, Stuart became Convener of the Business Committee in August 2016. He brought to the role a warm and collegial style and a crisp approach to conducting meetings, both equally valued by Business Committee members. His service to the University, as a member of its academic staff and then as Convener, has been outstanding and for that, all members of the Business Committee are hugely grateful.

Reports by the Conveners of the Standing Committees:

**Academic Standing Committee**

By Professor Stephen Hillier, Convener

Academic Standing Committee (ASC) priorities in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis were student and staff wellbeing, and academic quality. This report is based on meetings with Professor Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students (22 June 2020); Ellen MacRae, Edinburgh University Students’ Association President, (14 July 2020); Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (29 September 2020); and Fizzy Abou Jawad, Edinburgh University Students’ Association Vice-President Education (29 September 2020).

During a single week in March 2020, hundreds of face-to-face courses were switched to online teaching and assessment. Students and staff rallied to the call and pedagogical practices were revolutionised. Edinburgh was the first University in the UK publicly to say that it intended to remain fully on campus and be ready to operate by September, based on a hybrid learning model.

The hybrid approach to teaching and learning prevails in academic year 2020/21. First- and second-year undergraduate students are prioritised for in-person tuition; all large-scale lectures are digital. The exam diet is minimized, relying on open book assessment. Plagiarism software (Turnitin®) and selective vivas are available to design out threats to academic integrity. Additional support for students (for example, introductory and transition courses) and staff (for example, learning digital teaching technology) is available.

The shift to online teaching and assessment has been generally well received. However, it is a work in progress. Accessibility and inclusion, support for students and staff, and cross-University communications are ongoing concerns. Issues around academic space, travel services, accommodation, personal finances, isolation, staff burnout, mental health and so on, have also been voiced. There are particular concerns for the wellbeing of international students.

A beneficial outcome from this tumultuous period has been the opportunity to simplify the curriculum and adapt it more appropriately to current and future needs. ASC is optimistic that these changes can continue without academic standards being unduly affected.
Finance and Services Standing Committee

By Dr William Duncan, Convener

There have been two online meetings since the last report in March 2020.

18 June
with Lee Hamill, Director of Finance

We greatly appreciated his comprehensive, realistic analysis of the impact the Covid-19 pandemic is having on the University’s financial situation and were also much encouraged it is pro-actively preparing as well as it can.

Discussion focused around three aspects:

- How has the University dealt with the current circumstances so far?
- What are the main issues arising for next accounting year?
- What are the future implications?

We were impressed by the positive messages going forward and the determination that the University should emerge from the current situation as a strong institution well-placed to manage the post-Covid landscape.

5 October
with Interim Director of Estates, Grant Ferguson, and Director of Estate Development, Jane Johnston

Grant Ferguson summarised the significant, unexpected and immediate challenges that Covid-19 brought. This involved a huge amount of ‘beyond the call of duty’ work keeping essential services running 24/7 and preparing for safely re-opening. The complexity of this, given the scale and diversity of the estate, has been a massive exercise – with 550 buildings it is the second largest University estate in the UK.

Jane Johnston explained that prior to Covid-19 there were ambitious development plans, but much of this was now ‘on hold’. All construction work had to stop because of lockdown restrictions; some recently restarted where there was a binding contractual commitment. Projects like the Edinburgh Futures Institute at Quartermile will continue, but there is a 24-month moratorium on 13 other projects. Nevertheless, investment in the estate will be about £100 million in 2020/21.

It was good to hear that despite the inevitable budgetary pressures ahead, the commitments to sustainable design and to carbon neutral targets in line with government targets remained firm.

Future Work plan – meetings with Gavin McLachlan, Vice Principal and Chief Information Officer on Digital Infrastructure; Lee Hamill, Director of Finance; and James Saville, Director of HR.

International Standing Committee

By Krystyna Szumelukowa, Convener

The coronavirus crisis and the final withdrawal of the UK from the EU on 31 December 2020 have combined to accelerate a review of “the future direction of travel” for the University in its global context. On 8 October Professor James Smith, Vice-Principal International and Professor of African and Development Studies, presented the International Standing Committee with an update on the immediate impacts of the pandemic, the continuing uncertainty over Brexit negotiations including Erasmus and Horizon, and the consequences for Edinburgh Global within the University strategy for 2030.

Over 170 nationalities contribute to the life of the University and it had been expected that the number of international students starting or returning this semester would decline significantly, owing to the pandemic and Brexit combined. However, although research student numbers are slightly down, the numbers of postgraduates and undergraduates have been maintained at approximately 16,000.

The University has strengthened its communication and recruitment procedures for students as well as continuing to support staff and anticipate future immigration legislation post Brexit. Fifty per cent of international staff are from the European Union and are being incentivised to return to their home countries. The challenge will be to further improve on recruitment procedures to secure global talent and find ways to fund international learning and research opportunities for students and staff.

The 2020 Edinburgh Global Strategy has a strong regional focus and an understanding of different engagement strategies in different parts of the world. But now there will be a need for a substantive review. Notwithstanding Covid-19 and Brexit, the number of universities in South East Asia accelerating up the global league tables will result in a shift in student mobility as choice of university widens as the geopolitical shape of the world changes. It is certain that the number of students from China to the UK will decline. It will be necessary to intensify the future focus on fewer strategic partnerships and bilateral connections to support collaborative research, learning and to promote the development of transnational education for the benefit of all students.

Connectivity and mobility patterns are changing, out of which new student, staff and research pathways will emerge. Our next meeting will focus on the detail of global partnerships and how University of Edinburgh alumni across the world can give local support.
Public Affairs Standing Committee

By Candice Donnelly, Convener

The Public Affairs Standing Committee (PASC) has chosen the theme of Communication for its work this session. We started the year with an update on the University’s response to the coronavirus crisis from Theresa Merrick, Director of Communications and Marketing, who described how the University announces specific measures and showcases the world-class contributions being made by the University’s staff, students and alumni to the situation. Future meetings of the Committee will focus on other initiatives for stakeholder engagement, such as the new Community Plan as well as the ongoing work to build engagement with our alumni.

The pandemic has emphasised the strategic importance of communication within the University, and PASC wants to consider how the Business Committee communicates with its member base. Over the next year, we hope to improve our online presence with a relaunched website, and spend time looking more deeply at how we connect with General Council members and what we can do to best enable you to engage with us and the wider University.

A more detailed report of the Standing Committee meetings can be found in the Annex.

Report from the General Council Office

By Ann Smyth
Secretary of the General Council

The General Council Office has been closed since 20 March 2020 and remains closed at the time of going to print. Regretfully, until further notice, we are unable to be reached by telephone or routinely by post.

The work of the Office has continued with the Secretary and her Assistant homeworking online and making use of Zoom and Microsoft Teams to enable the Business Committee and its standing committees to continue their work on behalf of the General Council.

While we miss the more personal contact we previously had with General Council members, health and safety remains our priority. We have conformed throughout with Government regulations and University guidance in our arrangements for General Council and Business Committee matters and will continue to do so. We are deeply grateful to all the University staff who have so willingly made themselves available to us to keep us informed and to assist us in times of continuing uncertainty.

Work on migrating the General Council website to EdWeb has been delayed given the essential priority for Information Services of supporting the University’s much increased requirement for online working in its core business during the pandemic. Progress is still being made and members will be notified before the new website is activated.
Opportunity to contribute to the University’s governance

By Jock Millican

Since I graduated from the University I have always wanted to help the organisation in some small way because I got so much out of my time there. I grew up at university and developed life skills, enduring friendships and of course a degree. Although I had done a few minor things, I thought that my busy life precluded me from doing more until Sam Trett, a young graduate who I was mentoring in his business, asked me if I would consider him putting my name forward for a vacancy on the Business Committee of the General Council. It was the nudge that I needed.

The General Council has a statutory right to comment on matters affecting the wellbeing and prosperity of the University. The Business Committee has a key role in enabling the General Council to be appropriately informed on key contemporary issues to fulfil its governance role. I joined the Business Committee in 2016 and served on the Finance and Services committee, which meets four or five times a year and invites members of the University executive to talk to us on various matters such as finance, human resources, IT infrastructure and estates. I later became Convener of this committee.

Then when a Court Assessor role became vacant, I saw that I had the relevant skills and experience. I put my name forward and after an interview process, I was fortunate enough to be chosen. The Court is the governing body of the University and its powers are defined by act of parliament. The Court is the employer of all University staff and the owner of all the University’s assets (which are valued at £2.1 billion). It is responsible for the safeguarding of those assets, including the University’s extensive estate, and ensuring proper financial control arrangements and accounting for the University’s turnover of approximately £1.1 billion per annum, much of this derived from public funds. The Court is also responsible for ensuring effective audit and risk oversight arrangements and for the University’s compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations, including health and safety of staff and students.

I and my fellow General Council Court Assessors (there are three of us) report on Court proceedings to the Business Committee regularly throughout the year. I find the role fascinating and very rewarding and hopefully I am contributing to the Court. I would strongly urge members of the General Council to consider applying for a role on the Business Committee or indeed the Court when vacancies arise. It is an opportunity to give something back.

The General Council Half-Yearly Meeting

6 February 2021

Arrangements for the next General Council Half-Yearly Meeting have to be announced in this issue of Billet. With continuing restrictions on social gatherings at the time of going to print, and the paramount importance we attach to the health and safety of all in the University community including General Council members, the decision has had to be taken to conduct the event online.

We deeply regret the loss of the opportunity for General Council members to meet face to face and having to cancel the drinks reception and lunch which normally follow the February meeting.

We are fortunate to live in an era when technology allows us nonetheless to fulfil our statutory function of seeing the Principal deliver his annual report live online and with the facilities to put questions to him.

Accessing the meeting online

The General Council Half-Yearly Meeting will be held on Saturday 6 February 2021, at 10.30am and will be transmitted via Microsoft Teams Live Events.

The live link to join the meeting is https://teams.microsoft.com/i/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YmE3OTFmNjYtOWJhNy00OTBjLWI0N2EtMDMzZWJhMGQyMDkw%40thread.v2?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e9f06b0-1669-4589-8789-10a6934dc61%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22dc156c4e-27ad-446b-9fa5-9cc8f8164f0%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d

In case of any difficulty accessing the link, please use the link published on the General Council website: www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/newsandevents/half-yearly-meeting-6-february-2021

Alternatively a live link can be emailed to you. Please email a request to the General Council Office at any time before 5pm on Friday 5 February: general.council@ed.ac.uk

You should select the link just before the start time for the meeting. You will be taken to a page where you can choose to join on the web or download the app. If you already have the Teams app, the meeting will open there automatically. You may also be asked to either ‘sign in’ or ‘join anonymously’ (if you are not already logged into Teams). You can either sign in with your Microsoft Teams account or click ‘join anonymously’. This will allow you to enter your name before joining.

The link will allow you to see and hear the presenters individually. Members attending will have their own video and microphones centrally switched off during the meeting so it will not be possible to see or hear the audience.
The format of the meeting will follow the usual pattern. The agenda and papers can be found on page 17. As the June meeting had to be cancelled there are no minutes from that. The minutes from the meeting held in February 2020 were circulated in the summer edition of Billet and no corrections have been notified. However, these minutes do require to be formally approved and hence are included in the Agenda for that purpose in this meeting.

**Asking questions**
You can submit questions for the Principal or for the Convener of the Business Committee in advance or during the meeting.

Questions can be submitted in advance of the meeting to the General Council Office: general.council@ed.ac.uk. Please note questions emailed to this address will not be accessible during the meeting so must be received by 5pm on Friday 5 February at the latest. They will be managed by the Chair during the event.

Audience members can submit questions during the event by typing them into the Q&A function. Instructions for how to do this are given on the website: www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/newsandevents/half-yearly-meeting-6-february-2021

During the meeting you will be able to see the questions submitted in the Q&A panel on the right of your screen. You can endorse any question you approve of by clicking on ‘like’ above it. To make best use of time the chair will give priority to those questions which have the largest number of ‘likes’.

As usual for General Council meetings, all questions should be submitted with the full name, degree and year of graduation of the member concerned.

If there is insufficient time for all questions to be answered on the day, responses from the appropriate source will be emailed as soon as possible thereafter.

A recording of the event will subsequently be available to view on the General Council website.

**Advance notice of Summer Half-Yearly Meeting**
**Saturday 12 June, 2021**
McEwan Hall, Teviot Place, Edinburgh

We have a booking for the McEwan Hall in place for the summer Half-Yearly Meeting. The plan, virus restrictions permitting, is to follow the statutory meeting with an updated version of the programme for General Council members and their guests, which had to be cancelled in June 2020.

This is designed to showcase the University’s engagement in and with China with examples of partnerships with China from each of the three Colleges. A panel, chaired by the Principal, Peter Mathieson, will provide an opportunity for the audience to engage in discussion of the contemporary issues. The experience of Chinese students in Edinburgh will also be considered.

Information will appear as it becomes available on the General Council website and in the summer issue of Billet as usual.

**General Council Election, February 2021**
**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 2021 to 31 July 2025.

The names of the candidates appear in alphabetical order.

**Miss Tanya Calitz, LLM 2019**
*Proposed by Miss Pratyashi Bordoloi, MSc 2019*  
*Seconded by Mr Dominic Shaughn Hodge, LLM 2019*

The University of Edinburgh offered me a life-changing LLM study experience and I’d like to be a voice for current postgraduate students and remain involved with the activities and engagements at the University. I will act with humanity, excellence and decency to contribute to the success of the University.

**Ms Judith Lesley Drake, MA 2014**
*Proposed by Ms Sophie Elizabeth Marshall, MA 2012*  
*Seconded by Mr Arron Ashton, BSc 2013*

During Judith’s undergraduate degree she was convener of Edinburgh University Students’ Association’s Disability and Mental Wellbeing Action Group. Judith has served on different University access committees including project board member for the new Wellbeing Centre. As a current student she wants to support the University to promote diversity and disability access.

**Miss Elisabeth Feldstein, MCHEM 2019**
*Proposed by Miss Elisha Jhoti, MPHYS 2019*  
*Seconded by Miss Candice Donnelly, LLB 2005*

An international student from Canada and a proud alumna. I recognise the width of opportunity available at Edinburgh. From my current business role using my chemistry base I now wish to help guide the University in these challenging ever-changing times in its development for the next generation of students.

Continued overleaf
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.

Online voting

Since February 2012 the General Council has been able to vote via a secure website, the Elections channel of the MyEd Alumni Portal, which this year will be open from Tuesday 5 January, 2021, until 5pm Tuesday 2 February, 2021. In order to vote you must register via the EASE registration process, as explained below, by 5pm on Monday 1 February, 2021, at the latest.

To be able to vote online you need to be a member of the General Council 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 username 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.

Ms Kristin Hulda Hannesdottir, BAr 1974

Proposed by Mr John Gilmore Clifford, MSc 1990
Seconded by Professor Stephen Gilbert Hillier, DSc 1992

Three times graduate of the University of Edinburgh. I am Director of an architectural practice, Consul of Iceland and past Secretary and Dean of the Consular Corps in Edinburgh. I take keen interest in student welfare, particularly international students and the University’s standing internationally. Member of Business Committee 2015–2019.

Mrs Kirsty Joan MacGregor, MA 1981, MBA 2001

Proposed by Mr Gordon Douglas Cairns, LLB 1979
Seconded by Dr Frances Diana Dow, MA 1969

My expertise in leadership development, business consultancy and education alongside being Co-director of the University’s Global Compassion Initiative could contribute wide-ranging perspective to the Business Committee in supporting the University’s mission of world-class excellence. A personal priority is strengthening the University’s community both locally and internationally through the current challenges.

Mr Khuan Teck Matthew Seah, MBChB 2010

Proposed by Dr Alvin Anthony Soosay, MBChB 2009
Seconded by Dr Akila Visvanathan, MBChB 2009

I have designed and delivered educational initiatives at Cambridge’s Clinical School and I am an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. I combine NHS work with a passion for global health, and bring experience of administrative roles, project leadership and a collegial approach to working both locally and internationally.

The Rt Rev Brian Arthur Smith, MA 1966

Proposed by The Hon Lady Sarah Poyntell Labudde Wolfe, LLB 1989
Seconded by Sir Philip Mawer, MA 1971

Graduation was followed by study in Cambridge. I subsequently held several (UK) ecclesiastical and educational appointments (most recently Bishop of Edinburgh). I have paid a number of short visits to Africa (including examining the social effects of HIV/AIDS). Following retirement I spent time as a voluntary lecturer in Botswana.
Papers for the General Council Half-Yearly Meeting on Saturday 6 February, 2021

10.30am–12.30pm General Council Meeting (online via Microsoft Teams Live Events)

Details of how to view the meeting online are given on pages 11–12. Members are invited to submit questions to the meeting by email to general.council@ed.ac.uk by Friday 5 February, 2021, or during the meeting via the Q&A function in Microsoft Teams.

Agenda for the General Council Meeting

1. Results of the Elections for five Members of the General Council Business Committee
2. Note of the General Council Meeting – Saturday 13 June, 2020 (Paper A)
3. Minutes of the General Council held in Edinburgh on 1 February 2020 (Paper B)
4. Report of the Business Committee
5. Dates of future meetings of the General Council (Paper C)
7. Presentation by Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, of the Annual Report to the University
8. Any other competent business
9. Adjournment

Paper A

The meeting of the General Council on Saturday 13 June, 2020, was cancelled as a result of Covid-19. Papers and information intended for that meeting, which include the Minutes from the Half-Yearly Meeting held on 1 February 2020, were published in the summer 2020 issue of Billet.

Paper B

Re-issue of the Minutes from the Half-Yearly Meeting held on 1 February 2020 for formal approval by the General Council.

Minutes of the Meeting of the General Council held in Edinburgh on 1 February 2020

Present

Ms Ann Henderson University Rector, in the Chair
Ms Sarah Smith University Secretary
Professor Peter Mathieson Principal and Vice-Chancellor
The Convener also reported on the varied activities of the standing committees. Top priorities for the Academic Standing Committee, led by Professor Steve Hillier, included education technology, ethnicity and faith, and student and staff wellbeing. The University Chaplain gave a presentation to the committee talking about the opening of the new Wellbeing Centre in Bristo Square. The committee also heard from Professor Sian Bayne, Assistant Principal Digital Education, who reported that Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have now attracted 2.5 million students worldwide and one third of taught postgraduate courses are now delivered online.

Professor David Munro led his Constitutional Standing Committee through a review of the Constitutional Arrangements for the working of the General Council and its Business Committee, prompted by the changes made to University Ordinances arising from the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act of 2016. Resulting from this, two motions for approval by General Council members at this meeting related to changes to the timing of Half-Yearly Meetings and revisions to the General Council’s Constitutional Arrangements.

The Public Affairs Standing Committee is chaired by Sophie Marshall. As this committee is responsible for the General Council’s communication strategy they have been involved in the redevelopment of the Council’s website as well as holding meetings about affordable housing for students and the student networking site Platform One.

The Finance and Services Standing Committee is now chaired by Dr William Duncan and has had meetings with the University’s Director of Human Resources about the industrial action happening at the time and with the Director of Finance who discussed the Annual Accounts for 2019.

To conclude: The Convener stated that he is encouraged by the high degree of interest amongst General Council members in standing for membership of the Business Committee and delighted to see valued colleagues re-elected as well as looking forward to welcoming new members.

The report of the Business Committee was approved.

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

5. Dates of future meetings of the General Council

The next Half-Yearly Meeting will take place on Saturday 13 June, 2020, in the John McIntyre Conference Centre Pollock Halls, Edinburgh. Any Motions for discussion at this meeting should have been received in the General Council Office.

The following Statutory Half-Yearly Meeting will be held on Saturday 6 February, 2021, in room G.07, Informatics Forum, 10 Crichton Street, Edinburgh and any Motions for discussion at this meeting should be received in the General Council Office by Wednesday 18 November, 2020.
6. Notice of forthcoming Elections
There will be elections for four Members of the Business Committee in February 2021. [One member of the Business Committee has since resigned due to work commitments hence five vacancies have been advertised.] Nominations on forms available from the General Council Office and on the website should be received in the General Council Office by Wednesday 18 November, 2020.

7. Motion – Amendment to the Standing Orders
The Motion was approved.

8. Motion – Revisions to the General Council’s Constitutional Arrangements
The Motion was approved.

9. Presentation by the Principal of the Annual Report of the University
The Principal’s presentation focused on reviewing the academic year 2018/19. He reported that the University is one of the biggest in the UK with over 40,000 students and 15,000 staff and that in terms of the composition of those students, the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences is more than half of the University in terms of student numbers, and the University remains a very undergraduate predominant organisation.

Twenty-eight per cent of all students are Scottish-domiciled and 26 per cent are from the rest of the UK, therefore just over half of the student population is from the UK. Thirty-four per cent are from overseas outside the EU, and 12 per cent from the EU. The Principal commented on the huge increase in applications from mainland China to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and he reminded members of the University’s long history of recruiting students from North America. He mentioned also that the UK government’s restriction on post-study visas has meant a decrease in applications from India. Applications for places are still 10 times oversubscribed.

The Principal stated that the annual income of the University has passed £1 billion and went onto explain that this is not reflected accurately in the way that the accounts are reported under the legislation, which has to make provision for the University’s contribution to the Superannuation Scheme.

Professor Mathieson highlighted a number of members of staff who had been awarded prizes and honours before going on to talk about the City Region Deal, which includes a number of projects to benefit economic growth across the region and has enabled the development of hubs, such as the Bayes Centre and Edinburgh Futures Institute.

With uncertainty still surrounding Brexit, the Principal reassured members that the University has plans for mitigation and will continue to maintain relationships with government and existing partnerships, while building new ones, such as the launch of a new alliance called Una Europa – a collaboration with eight universities from eight different European regions.

Strategy 2030 is a 10-year strategy document for the University that sets out the University’s agenda, principles and aims, and defines its values, with a particular emphasis on people. This can be viewed online at www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030

The Principal concluded with mention to the coronavirus outbreak, stating that the University is listening to the advice from the Scottish Government, from the UK Government, and from the World Health Organization. The Principal also made mention to the fact that there are a number of experts in the University on this virus, and other viruses, and public health more generally, who are contributing to government advice.

The full text of the Principal’s remarks, as well as the record of the discussion that followed the presentation, are contained in the Annex to the Billet. The presentations can also be viewed on the website at www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media

10. Any other competent business
There was no other competent business.

11. 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.

Rev Dr Harriet Harris closed the meeting with a benediction.

The Annex to the Billet containing supporting papers for the Agenda, including communications from the University Court, full Standing Committee reports, a transcript of the Principal’s presentation, and the Business Committee’s report to the meeting on 1 February 2020 is available on the website at: www.general-council.ed.ac.uk/media
Paper C

Dates of future meetings of the General Council
The next Half-Yearly Meeting will take place in the morning of Saturday 12 June 2021 in the McEwan Hall, Teviot Place. Any motions for discussion at that meeting should be received in the General Council office by 24 March 2021. The exact time of the meeting will appear, with the Agenda and papers for the meeting in the Summer issue of Billet.

The following statutory Half-Yearly Meeting will provisionally be held on Saturday 12 February 2022 at a venue in central Edinburgh to be advised. Any motions for discussion at the meeting on 12 February 2022 should be received in the General Council office by Wednesday 24 November 2021.

Paper D

Notice of forthcoming Elections
There will be an election for five Members of the Business Committee in February 2022. Nominations on forms available to download from the General Council website or received from the office should be received in the General Council Office by 24 November 2021.

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
Mr Jock Millican, BSc, FCILT 2023
The Hon Lady Wolffe (Sarah Wolffe QC) 2023

Business Committee

Convener: Sir Philip Mawer, DLitt, LLD (Hon), MA, DPA, Hon FIFA 2024
Vice-Convener: Gordon D Cairns, LLB 2024
A Convener of Academic Standing Committee: Stephen Hillier, OBE, DSc 2024
C Convener of Constitutional Standing Committee: Gordon D Cairns, LLB 2024

F Convener of Finance and Services Standing Committee: Dr William Duncan, BSc, PhD, CIPD 2022
P Convener of Public Affairs Standing Committee: Candice Donnelly, LLB (Hons), Dip LP, NP, WS 2022
I Convener of International Standing Committee: Ms Krystyna Szumielukowa, BA Hons, MPhil, MRTP 2024

Members

Chancellor’s Assessor: Sheriff Principal Alastair Dunlop QC ex officio
I Andrew Miller, CBE BSc, PhD, DUniv FRSE 2021
A Judith Drake, MA, MSc 2021
P Brian Smith, MA, MLitt 2021
I John Clifford, MA, MSc, FRSA 2021
F David Houston, BSc, MBA, PhD, FSITM 2022
A Ario Santini, Doc(hc), PhD, DipFMed, BDS, DDS, FDS, FFGDP, DGDP, FADM 2022
F Arron Ashton, BSc 2022
P Sophie Marshall, MA 2023
P Moyra Forrest, DL, MA, MCLIP 2023
A Bruce Ritson, OBE, MD, FRCPE, FRCPsych 2023
A Lady Joyce Caplan, BEd 2023
F Peter De Vink, BCom 2024
F Almira Delibegovic-Broome QC 2024
P Francis McManus, MLitt, LLB(Hons), FRSPH, MREHIS, FHEA 2024
I Graeme Reid, BSc, PhD, FRSB 2024
I Frances D Dow, CBE, MA, DPhil 2024

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,
‘I’ a member of the International Standing Committee, and
‘P’ a member of the Public Affairs Standing Committee.