

University of St Andrews

University Court

REINFORCED EXTRAORDINARY COMMITTEE OF COURT (RECC)

Note of the FIFTH meeting of RECC held on Friday 26 June 2020

The Committee met remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Dame Anne Pringle, *Senior Governor (Chair)*; Professor Sally Mapstone, *Principal*; Professor Stuart Monro, *Deputy Chair of Court and Convenor of G&N*; Mr Adrian Greer, *Chancellor's Assessor*; Mr Jonathan Hewitt, *General Council Assessor*; Professor Mark Harris, *Senate Assessor*; Ms Donna Pierz-Fennell, *Non-Academic Staff Assessor*; Mr Jamie Rodney, *President, Students' Association*; Mr Nigel Morecroft, *Non-Executive Member and Convenor of RemCom*; Professor Sir David Wallace, *Non-Executive Member and Convenor of ARC*.

In regular attendance: Professor Lorna Milne, *Master of the United College*; Mr Alastair Merrill, *Vice-Principal Governance*; Mr Derek Watson, *Quaestor & Factor*; Ms Margaret Sinclair, *Executive Officer to the University Court & Senate*.

In attendance: Professor Brad MacKay, *Senior Vice-Principal and Vice-Principal International Strategy and External Relations*, Mr Andy Goor, *Chief Financial Officer*; Mr Dan Marshall, *President, Students' Association (Elect)* as observer.

Preliminaries

It was agreed that Item 3.3 would be taken before Item 3.2 on the Agenda as discussion of student numbers was integral to discussion of the Draft Financial Plan.

1. Minutes of RECC Meeting 4

- 1.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2020 (on file, RECC/19/13) as a correct record.

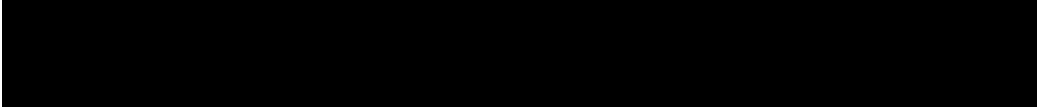
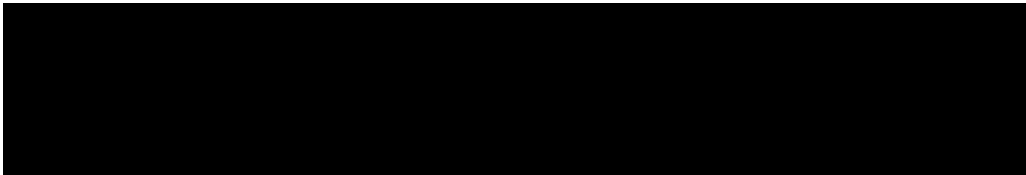
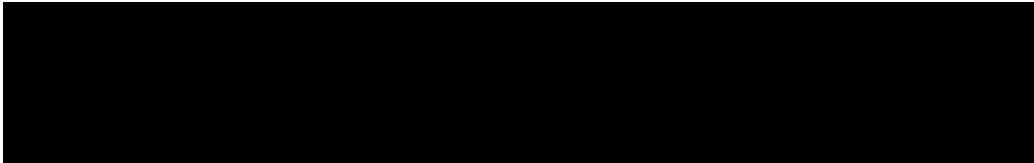
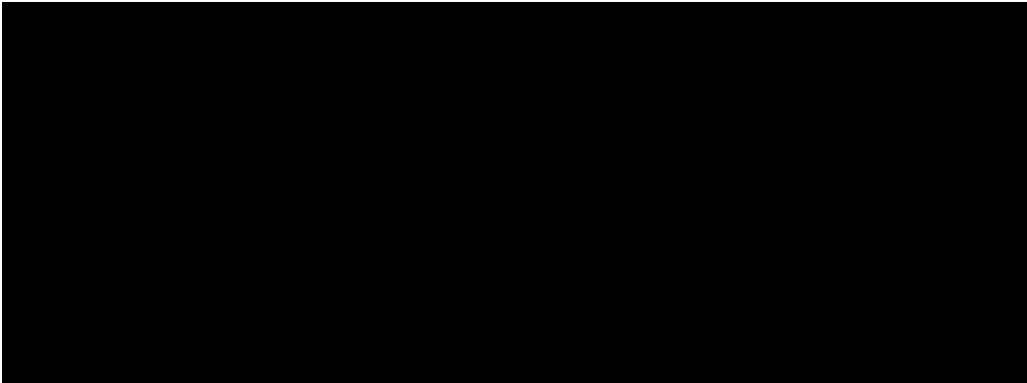
2. Matters considered

2.1. Update from Principal

The Committee received a verbal update from the Principal.

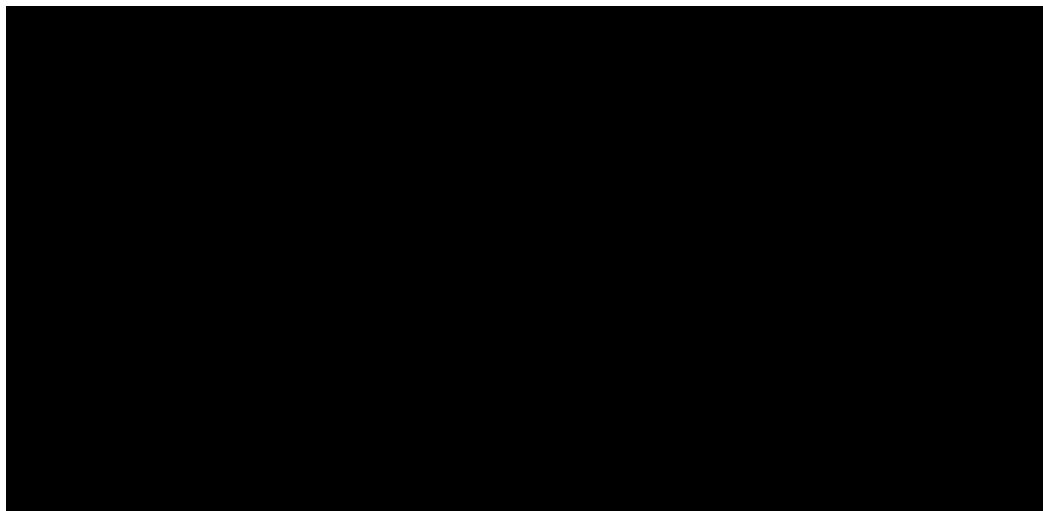
- The Principal updated RECC on the Black Lives Matter situation at the University (which had been the focus of discussion at the Court meeting

of 12 June¹). On 25 June, Papa Obeng-Sabah (Interim Rector's Assessor) and the Principal had co-chaired a two-hour round table with about 20 of the University's BAME students and alumni. Ruth Woodfield, AVP Diversity and Jasmin Hinds, Research Fellow and Project Manager in the Equality and Diversity unit had also participated. Shortly before the meeting the students had submitted a 40-page BAME Students' Action Plan, which was discussed at the meeting. The Action plan would be published in the next few weeks, with the University's support. The meeting was largely very constructive. As a result, the students now had a much better sense of what the University had been doing and would take forward with their support, especially around admissions and outreach, curriculum review, and alumni and careers support. The University had a far more nuanced sense of the microaggressions students had experienced in the University community and the best ways of communicating and working with them in future. It had also been agreed that the Principal would join one of the meetings of the BAME staff network towards the start of the next semester.

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- The UK Government had announced about £400m of strength in places funding for 7 universities, including Glasgow and Edinburgh. RECC should note that this related to funding applications put in some considerable time ago and that the University was not a consortium beneficiary of this funding.
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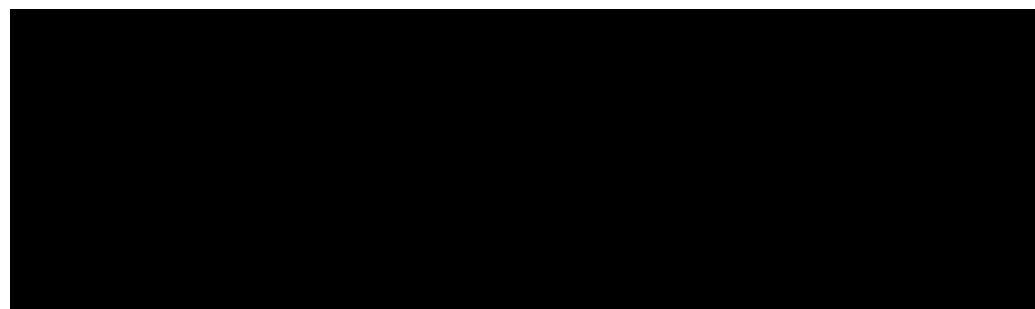
¹ Minutes 2019-2020 No.4 refer.

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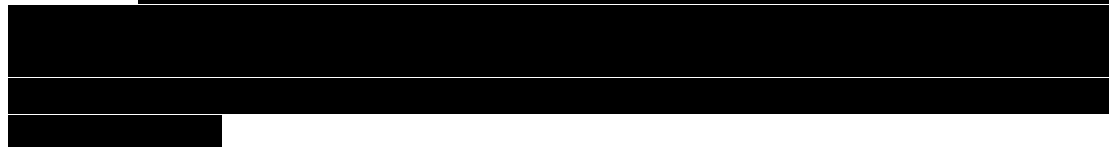


- The Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery (chaired by Benny Higgins) had now issued a report. The report was largely positive in terms of the important potential contribution of higher education to the economic recovery [REDACTED]

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The Principal answered questions from Members on the timing of announcements regarding Government funding; covenant implications for potential additional loan arrangements; the relationship between the Treasury and HMRC; the scope of the BAME students' action plan to be published; and GOYO.² [REDACTED]



3. Coronavirus

3.1 Financial Planning and Scenario Planning

The Quaestor provided an update (Sharepoint-update RECC 26 June) to the position presented to RECC on 29 May (on file, RECC/19/11).

3.3 RECC/19/15 – Student Numbers

² Global Online Year One.

This item was taken before 3.2.

The Committee noted the paper presented by the Senior Vice-Principal (on file, RECC/19/15, Student Numbers) which provided an update to the position presented to RECC on 29 May 2020 (on file, RECC/19/12), and to Court on 12 June 2020 (on file, Court 19/78).

The current view continued to be that there were reasons to be cautiously optimistic about the overall numbers profile for both undergraduate and postgraduate taught cohorts, but that a range of persistent global uncertainties prevented a definitive view being taken. The situation continued to be closely monitored, but a fully clear picture of the 2020/2021 student cohort was unlikely to materialise before September.

The Senior Vice-Principal answered questions from Members on his views in relation to the potential for overshoot of targets; conversion rates; anticipated attrition rates; deferrals; returning students; and comparators with peer universities. [REDACTED]

3.2 RECC/19/14 – Draft Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2022/2023

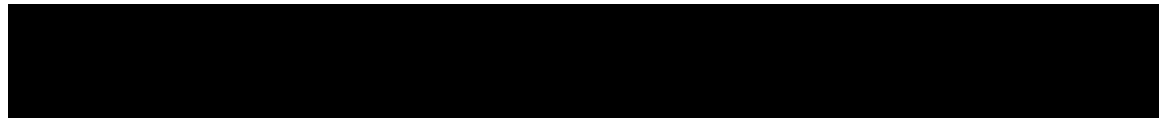
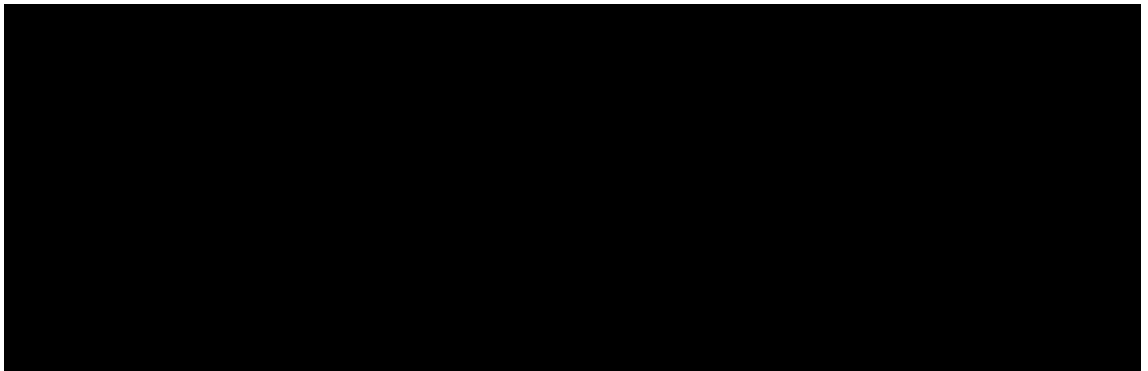
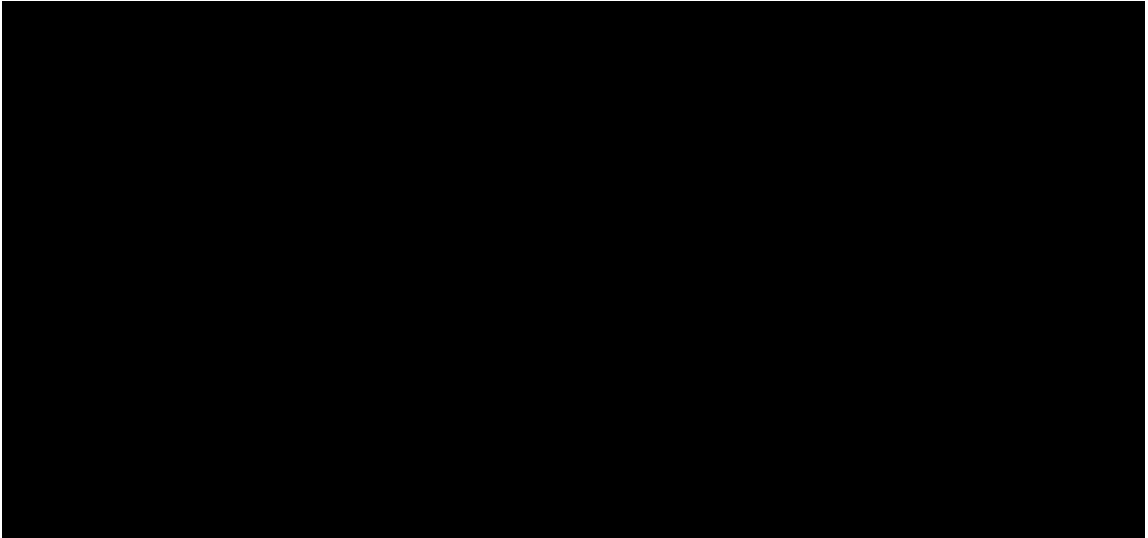
The Chief Financial Officer presented the Draft Financial Plan.

This paper presented the Financial Plan for the years 2020/21 through to 2022/23/. The plan recognised the significant impact COVID-19 has had on the University, the wider higher education sector as well as the global economy and was presented for discussion and approval on behalf of Court. The plan contained no assumptions on any consequences of any UK or Scottish Government investment packages post COVID-19 beyond that confirmed from the SFC relating to research support.

The plan was scrutinised in detail by the Committee during the lengthy discussion which followed.

Student Numbers

There was considerable discussion of the figures contained in the Financial Plan for tuition fees (see also 3.3 above). The process by which the figures used in the Financial Plan had been arrived at was discussed in some detail



Questions of Detail

The Chief Financial Officer volunteered to respond to any questions of detail which Members might have offline.

Approval

Following discussion, and having noted the presentation to be given to RECC at the next meeting, RECC approved the Draft Financial Plan on behalf of Court and commended the Chief Financial Officer and his team for its production in such uncertain and volatile times.

4. RECC/19/16 - Furloughing Update

The Committee noted the update provided by the Vice-Principal Governance on the University's use of the UK Government's Job Retention Scheme.

- Furloughing letters had now been issued to 684 staff (equating to 564.4 FTE). The paper provided a breakdown of numbers by category: - Research; Technical, Operations; and Administrative.
- Over 200 flexible workers had been furloughed during March-May 2020.
- Following the case by case review undertaken by HR, 60 (of 370) PDRA staff had been found to be eligible for furlough.
- As previously reported to RECC, a refund had been received from HMRC for March and April [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The amount being claimed would start to diminish in June as staff were brought back from furlough to prepare buildings for re-opening.
- The Job Retention Scheme had been extended to 31 October 2020 with 10 June set as the final date an employer could furlough employees for the first time. The scheme would close to new entrants on 30 June 2020. The new Flexible Furlough scheme would commence on 1 July 2020 and was scheduled to end on 31 October 2020. This would allow previously furloughed employees to return to work on a part time basis. These changes were likely to have little impact on the University as it was anticipated that most staff would return from furlough over the course of July and that very few, if any, staff would be still be furloughed by the end of August.
- The University continued to adhere closely to the latest HMRC guidance, and to meet the relevant conditions set out by HMRC in order to ensure that, when audited, claims could be justified.

The Committee expressed thanks to the HR team for their work on maximizing the utilisation of the Job Retention Scheme.

5. Date of next meeting

The Committee will meet on Friday 10 July 2020 at 2 pm, via Microsoft Teams.

Margaret Sinclair

Clerk to the RECC

26 June 2020