

University of St Andrews

University Court

REINFORCED EXTRAORDINARY COMMITTEE OF COURT (RECC)

Note of the SIXTH meeting of RECC held on Friday 10 July 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 Dan Marshall, *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, *Deputy Principal and Master of the United College*; Mr Alastair Merrill, *Vice-Principal Governance*; 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*.

Apologies: [REDACTED]

1. Minutes of RECC Meeting 5

- 1.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2020 (on file, RECC/19/17) as a correct record.

2. Matters considered

2.1. Update from Principal

The Committee received a verbal update from the Principal.

- The University Research support package from the UK Government, highlighted to RECC at its last meeting, had been announced. It consisted of two major support mechanisms: (i) a £280m fund for extensions to grants affected by the Covid-19 crisis and its initial aftermath. This funding was imminent; and (ii) a low cost long-term loan scheme supplemented by a smaller amount of grants to cover up to 80

per cent of the losses from international student income in the academic year 2020/21 capped at the level of any institution's non-publicly funded research (this could include research funded by charities, industry, and institutionally self-funded). The overall size of the second package would be driven by the scale of the fall in international students.

This opportunity of support was very welcome. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

- The UK Chancellor's recent summer economic update to Parliament had centred on a plan for jobs. There had been no specific reference to the higher education sector but points of relevance were (i) the decision that organisations that retained furloughed staff in work until January 2021 should receive a £1k per person bonus [REDACTED] and (ii) under the Barnett formula, the Scottish government was due to get an extra £800m, [REDACTED]

- The Scottish Government's Sustainability Plan for [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] However, it contained the announcement of the creation of a Covid-19 University Support fund by SFC. This would be 'open to those institutions which have exhausted other avenues of borrowing, and still required support, for example to provide an injection of working capital'. Quite how much funding would be available, and how this might intersect with the UK Government's restructuring fund remained unclear. It had also been indicated that the Scottish Government would work with the new Scottish National Investment Bank, SFC and universities 'to explore the contribution the Bank's investment could make to institutions' plans for recovery'. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The other major announcement in the Sustainability Plan had been that Home fee status for EU students would end from academic year 21/22 and that Scottish institutions would be able to charge EU students international fees. The statement also guaranteed that for AY 21/22 any resources freed up by this change would remain within the sector, including to support additional Scottish students and for use for scholarships for EU and international students. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- The Scottish Government sponsored SFC review of the coherence and sustainability of tertiary education in Scotland was currently in its first phase. This phase would run until the end of August 2020 and focus on short term and immediate stabilisation, safe provision, economic [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- The PO had been working exhaustively for the past few months on readying staff and students to prepare for a very different working and studying experience as lockdown eased. Preparations for this had been extensive and meticulous, and remained subject to recurrent recalibration as guidelines clarified or altered. Members of the PO would be able to answer any questions from RECC on these preparations.
- The Committee noted that, in order to allow members of the PO to take [REDACTED] annual leave, the Senior Governor had agreed that reports to the next few RECC meetings would be predominantly oral. Crucial information would continue to be discussed at RECC with any Court-level decisions recorded in appropriate detail.

The Principal answered questions from Members on: the SFC review (including its timescale and scope, both of which were perceived as being ambitious); general sector intelligence; the work being undertaken in preparation for reopening, including liaison with Heads of School; the feedback received from staff who had already returned to work as to any concerns or anxieties about the process; and operational detail including arrangements for the provision of face coverings.

3. Coronavirus

3.1 RECC/19/18 – Student Numbers

The Committee noted the paper presented by the Senior Vice-Principal (on file, RECC/19/18, Student Numbers) which provided an update to the position presented to RECC on 26 June 2020 (on file, RECC/19/15).

[REDACTED]

The Senior Vice-Principal highlighted key trends and numbers from the paper and there was discussion of the geopolitical factors which were still creating uncertainty [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

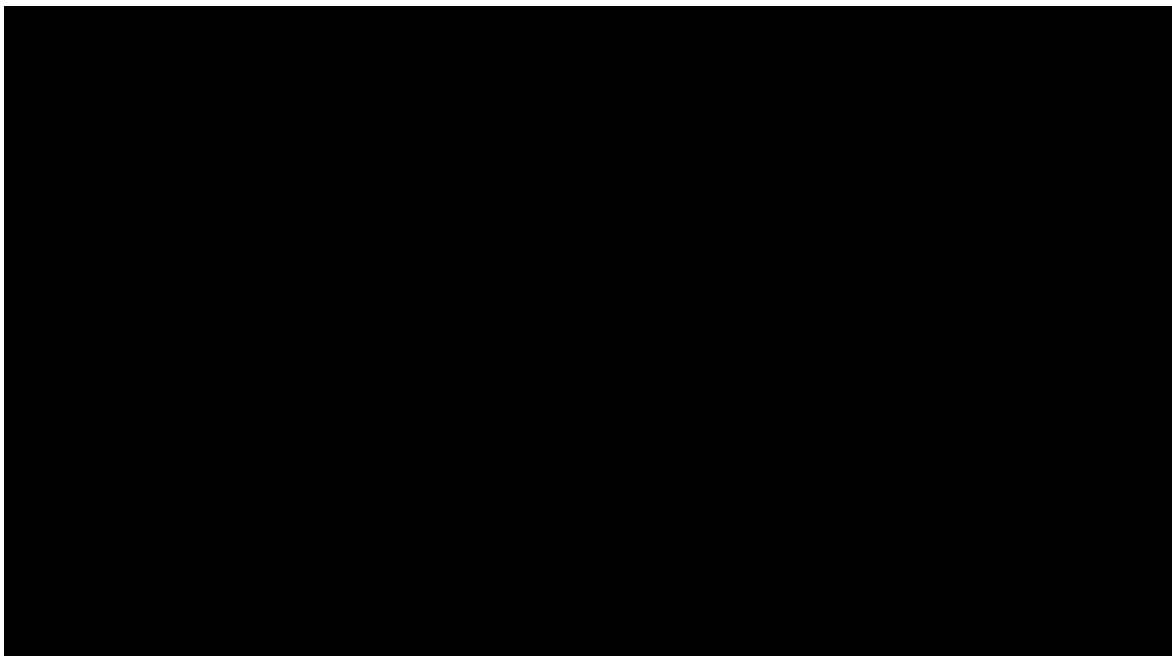
The Senior Vice-Principal answered questions from Members [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3.2 Financial Planning and Scenario Planning



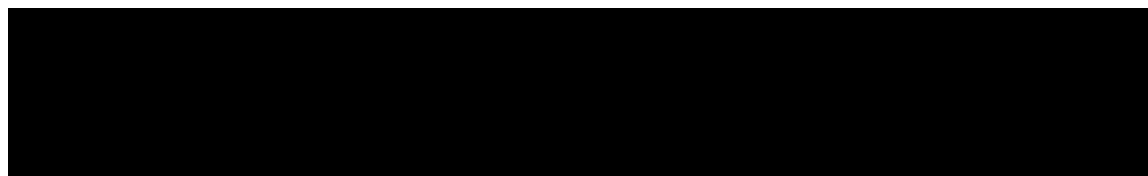
4. Furloughing Update

The Committee noted the verbal update provided by the Vice-Principal Governance on the University's use of the UK Government's Job Retention Scheme. The scheme ends in its current format on 31 July 2020.

- Plans were underway for the return of the 687 individuals who had been furloughed.
- Consideration was being given to whether use could be made of the part time furloughing rules, but [REDACTED]
- The University would seek to benefit from the Chancellor's recent announcement regarding the payment of a bonus to organisations for retention of furloughed staff, [REDACTED]

5. AOCB

5.1 Recommencement of Recruitment Exercise



5.2 Court Away Day

RECC noted the decision to plan for the Court Away Day in September to be held remotely. Court Office would notify Court members accordingly and further detail would follow in due course.

Date of next meeting

The Committee will meet on Friday 24 July 2020 at 2 pm, via Microsoft Teams.

Margaret Sinclair

Clerk to the RECC

15 July 2020