

**MINUTE OF THE STATUTORY HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL  
HELD ON SATURDAY 24 JUNE 2017 AT 10.30am  
IN PARLIAMENT HALL, SOUTH STREET, ST ANDREWS**

The Chancellor, The Rt Hon Lord Campbell of Pittenweem, was in the Chair and welcomed 52 members to the meeting.

**1. Minute of the last statutory half-yearly meeting of the General Council held on 26 November 2016**

There were no matters arising and the minute was adopted.

**2. Declaration of the results of the election to fill seven places on the Business Committee**

Mr Alastair Merrill, Registrar and Clerk to the General Council, reported that an election had been held to fill seven vacancies on the Business Committee from 1 July 2017, as a result of six members reaching the end of their term and one by an earlier resignation. Voting was carried out online from 12 noon on 22 May until 12 noon on 16 June 2017 and by postal ballot on request. Twenty-two candidates stood for election and a full list of nominees could be found on page 10 of the billet. The first six candidates – Brittany Collins, Alison Baverstock, Wendy Russell, Gillian Stamper, Nicholas Bibby and Roger Knox – were elected to fill the four-year vacancies and the seventh candidate – Andreas Klasen – filled the remaining two-year term of the member who resigned. 857 members voted online, representing 1.2% of the total electorate and a reduction of 101 members compared with the previous election. No postal ballots were submitted. The meeting congratulated the successful candidates on their election, and thanked those who had not been successful.

**3. Report by the Convener of the Business Committee**

Mr Graham Wynd began by welcoming the seven newly elected members of the Business Committee and thanking the other candidates for their willingness to stand.

**Business Committee Meetings:** Since the last General Council meeting in November 2016, the Committee had met in January in St Andrews and in May in Edinburgh, some members joining the meeting by Skype. The approved minute of the January meeting and draft minute of the May meeting were contained in the billet. Topics discussed included the following:

**A proposal to appoint rather than elect two General Council Assessors** – Court's Governance and Nominations Committee (G&N) had been examining how best to incorporate the requirements of the recent Higher Education Governance Act. Consideration had been given to the possibility of appointing rather than electing General Council Assessors (a move being pursued by other ancient universities) in view of the very low voter turnout in General Council elections. The Business Committee had made representations that General Council Assessors should continue to be elected, whilst recognising the need to improve the diversity of representation and mix of desired skills. Planning was in hand for the next Assessor election in 2018 and the Business Committee would provide a progress report to G&N in the autumn.

**Action plan to improve voter turnout and gender balance** – the Committee has started to tackle low voter turnout, which it believes is largely due to low engagement with what the

General Council is and does. At the Alumni Festival Weekend in April, a leaflet was included in the welcome pack advertising a drop-in-café on the Saturday afternoon for those interested. The Business Committee also had a stand at each of the four graduation garden parties in June with a video presentation, banner and leaflets, and members on hand to approach new graduates. Lessons learned from the recent Business Committee elections will be applied to the General Council Assessor elections due to take place next year. Going forward, co-operation from major alumni clubs would be sought to raise the profile of the General Council and to encourage voter participation, as well as advice from the Students' Association on how to reach the student body more broadly. Publicity would be explored with Corporate Communications, Development and others. The aim would be to improve members' awareness with the hope of improving voter turnout and attendance at General Council meetings. Mr Wynd gratefully acknowledged the Principal's advice on improving gender balance in the recent Business Committee election. Recognising that there was much more to do, he pointed out that of over 100 new graduates approached at the graduation garden parties, none knew anything about the General Council or that they had just become members. He also drew attention to the fact that 22 candidates standing for seven places in the recent Business Committee election was a record number in anyone's memory. However, this may have adversely affected participation due to the length of time needed to complete the ballot paper and perhaps helps to explain the drop from 958 in the last to 857 in the most recent election. Mr Wynd was pleased that nine of the 22 candidates were women and that, from 1 July, five women and seven men would make up the 12-strong elected Business Committee membership.

**Review of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance** – the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance was introduced in 2013 and compliance with its terms is a condition of grant funding from the Scottish Funding Council. The Code was currently being reviewed by a steering group led by Iain Marchant, and a revised draft had been circulated this spring for consultation. The Business Committee's response to the consultation exercise had welcomed the slimming down of the Code to seven high-level principles and recognised the merits of the greater transparency and openness sought. However, concern was expressed about the increased number of requirements for compliance (over 230) which could well prove to be burdensome and stifle initiative. The Business Committee had made fifteen suggestions, mostly in relation to greater clarity and consistency and to protect the interests of General Councils and similar bodies.

### **Ordinances and Resolutions Sub-Committee**

In relation to the draft resolution mentioned at the last meeting, Court had, to avoid confusion, renamed a new Master of Studies degree. The Sub-Committee had just commented on a new ordinance dealing with Academic Freedom, as defined by the new Higher Education Governance Act. This is the first of what is expected to be a flow of new ordinances made necessary by the Higher Education Governance Act.

### **Increasing income from non-traditional sources**

The Quaestor and Factor, Derek Watson, remained receptive to the Business Committee's initiative to help the University take advantage of business opportunities. The next step was to

identify some current commercial initiatives being considered by the University and try to find appropriate resource among General Council members to help accelerate their progress.

### **Meeting of the General Council Representatives**

Contact with counterparts in the other ancient universities and with the University of Dundee had been maintained. The annual meeting held in Edinburgh the previous week had included discussion of a number of common issues, including the Higher Education Governance Act, the Code of Good Governance and the method of choosing General Council Assessors. The Convener concluded his report by expressing thanks to fellow Business Committee members for their continued commitment and paid tribute to the four members retiring from the Committee – Alan Frith, Tony Bellhouse, Robert Gelb and Taylor Carey – for their service to the Committee. He also gratefully acknowledged the support for the work of the General Council given between meetings by the University administration, and thanked all those participating in and attending the present meeting.

*The Chancellor thanked the Convener for his comprehensive report and invited questions from the floor.*

Comments from the floor included a request for there to be a statement from candidates in elections about what they intended to contribute to the University in addition to their biography; a suggestion that high-profile proposers and seconders might in some cases give unfair advantage to candidates; and that creating constituencies, such as age bands, might reduce the number of candidates and result in a more representative selection of members. The Business Committee Convener promised a review of the selection procedures in light of the problems created by the high number of candidates in the last election, which would include consideration of a pro forma for candidates to complete. The Chancellor added that other organisations require a statement of intent in addition to a CV.

### **4. University Address – Professor Sally Mapstone, Principal and Vice-Chancellor**

With the June 2017 graduation ceremonies and this year's academic promotions behind her, the Principal now felt thoroughly up to speed and no longer the 'new' Principal. Since taking up post last September, she had visited every School and service Unit, held town hall meetings and open fora and hosted receptions and other events, in addition to sending out regular email reports. The Principal thoroughly enjoyed meeting alumni, both at home and abroad, at a wide variety of events, including carol services, the Chancellor's Circle, the April Alumni Festival Weekend, a meeting of the After Many Days Club and, of course, General Council, and remarked on the great sense of warmth and affection felt by alumni for St Andrews. The Principal felt that the University was really fortunate to have such an engaged and enthusiastic alumni body and would continue to make time for alumni events in the year ahead, both at home and abroad. The international character of our alumni is a great asset as the University looks to forge new global partnerships in research collaboration, development and student recruitment.

In terms of the University's rankings and reputation, the Principal was delighted to report that the University holds third place in all three domestic league tables, behind only Oxford and Cambridge. In the *Guardian University Guide 2018*, St Andrews was the only Scottish university in the top 20 of the 119 universities ranked. St Andrews was also ranked first in the *Times Higher*

*Education* student experience survey. Internationally, the University had been ranked among the world's top 100 for the eleventh year running by the QS World Rankings 2018 and was placed fourth in the UK for international collaboration by the influential Leiden Rankings. The University's excellent teaching had also been recognised that very week with a Gold award in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). St Andrews was particularly commended for its strong emphasis on the development and sharing of good teaching practice, institutional culture of rigour and stretch, well-equipped teaching and learning spaces, use of digital resources and overall environment of student engagement, motivation and collective identity. Holding up these results as a testament to the excellence of the University's staff, despite its relatively small size, the Principal gave a few examples of staff recognition this year: Professor John Hudson (History) was elected to the British Academy and Professor Russell Morris (Chemistry) to the Royal Society. Professor Carole Hillenbrand (History) was awarded the British Academy's Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for outstanding contribution to transcultural understanding; Emeritus Professor of Chemistry David Cole-Hamilton FRSE was awarded the prestigious Alwin-Mittasch Prize; and Zinnie Harris of the School of English and Byre Theatre won Best Director in the 2017 Critics' Awards for Theatre in Scotland for her production of *A Number* at The Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh.

Turning from teaching to research, the Principal gave Dr Hazel Cameron's (International Relations) revelatory work on state-sponsored massacres in post-independence Zimbabwe as an example of the global significance of research at St Andrews. Thanks to Dr Karen Brown (Art History) who won a major and highly competitive European Union Horizon 2020 grant, St Andrews will also take the lead in an international project exploring the role of community-led museums in protecting heritage. Commercialising research, where appropriate, through spin-out companies is an area of increasing strategic importance for the University. This year four spin-out companies – MOFgen (Chemistry), Pneumagen (Biology), Xelect (Biology) and Genuswave (Biology) – had raised almost £3m in investment and subcontracted more than £1m of research and development work back into the University. The Principal cited Arlight – an affordable ophthalmoscope aimed at health workers in low-income countries – as an example of research being commercialised to help tackle global challenges rather than to generate commercial profits. The spin-off company, launched in January, will promote sales and coordinate the subsidised distribution of the device to low income countries, potentially saving the sight of millions of people.

The Principal paid tribute to the University's wonderful students who also play a role in its success. This year the total student population of 8,786 was made up of 7,047 undergraduates, 888 taught and 851 research postgraduates. The Principal had been extremely impressed by the striking combination of intelligence, modesty and ambition of the 50 students awarded a Principal's Scholarship for Academic Excellence on the basis of outstanding examination results in their final year. Many were going on to further study and into a wide range of careers in public service, business and vocational work across the world. On the sports field, Saints Golf enjoyed its most successful season to date, winning the men's National Championship in April for the first time in 19 years. First-year student Matthew Myers had ended the season as the top student golfer in the UK. At the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Blind Mirth, a comedy troupe, won the Derek Award for Best Improv Show, while Delay & Detach, a show funded by the Mermaids Performing

Arts Theatre Fund, was runner-up for the Scottish Arts Club Theatre Award. This year, the Students' Association's focus had been on student wellbeing, the promotion of equal opportunities, and mental and sexual health. The Students' Association had also organised debates on the implications of Brexit in support of the international character of the University.

The Principal had been very pleased to see strong engagement with equality and diversity issues across the University, from the Students' Association to senior management, embracing initiatives such as International Women's Day, St Andrews PRIDE and Scottish Interfaith Week.

Turning to the political context, one of the Principal's first priorities in her first year as Principal and Vice-Chancellor was to build strong relationships across the Scottish HE sector and with Holyrood and Westminster. She meets regularly with UK and Scottish Government ministers and officials in her capacity as Principal and as a member of a number of sector bodies, and has been elected a member of both the boards of Universities UK and the Higher Education Policy Institute. In March, she introduced the University to key MPs and peers at a House of Commons reception hosted by Stephen Gethins MP, and was delighted that the Chancellor was able to join her and host a dinner afterwards.

Within Scotland, the University was closely engaged with the Scottish Government on issues including fair access to education, knowledge transfer and enterprise. The Principal chairs one of three Universities Scotland workstreams reviewing the recommendations of the Scottish Funding Council's Commission on Widening Access and has encouraged close integration between this work and other Scottish Government initiatives, including the 'Learner Journey' review which explores routes from senior school into further and higher education. With her encouragement, the Universities Scotland response strongly endorsed the flexible four-year degree, with its variety of entry and exit points tailored to students' attainment.

The Principal supported sector-wide campaigns on the free movement of international students, one of the many issues debated during the passage of the UK Government's Higher Education and Research Act. Freedom to recruit internationally was really important to the University, giving access to excellent students and staff of all nationalities and contributing to our international atmosphere which students value greatly. The University continues to lobby for the removal of students from net migration figures. The Principal would continue to make the case for the free movement of students and staff, access to EU research funding and, crucially, clarity over fee status for EU students.

Looking ahead, alongside our political networks, the University is investing in world-class facilities. The biomass boiler at Guardbridge, now known as the Eden Campus, where green energy, innovation, research excellence and entrepreneurship can come together to work and do business, was commissioned in December and takes the University one step closer to the goal of being carbon neutral for energy use. In another significant milestone, the University's newest nursery at Roseangle House on the East Sands opened in April. Work on the new building for the Scottish Oceans Institute would start shortly. This project was currently the University's top capital priority, and had already received £0.5m of funding from the Wolfson Foundation and for which fundraising was continuing. Good progress was being made on the creation of a new state-

of-the-art Music Centre to provide rehearsal, teaching and performance spaces. Plans were well under way for a new centre of excellence for tennis at the Sports Centre. The University was also in the very last stages of negotiation with Fife Council over the contract to site the new Madras College building at Langlands and take the South Street site into the University's academic estate.

The Principal acknowledged that investment on this scale is not without its challenges. With limited support from the Scottish Funding Council, the majority of the costs for these capital projects were being met through prudent financial direction and the use of funds earmarked strategically for these purposes, with a growing proportion also being met, where possible, through philanthropy. Stressing the importance of ensuring that St Andrews is identified for the superlative quality of its teaching and research, its student experience and its community relations, the Principal ended by expressing her confidence, as she concluded her first year in office, that the distinctive identity of St Andrews in Scotland, its international outlook and global, and highly supportive alumni network saw the University in really good shape for the year ahead.

*The Chancellor thanked the Principal for her address and invited questions from the floor.*

In response to a suggestion about heightening awareness of the impact of Brexit in the UK, particularly in relation to research funding, perhaps through interviews, the Principal agreed that interviews were valuable and give visibility but also emphasised the importance of maximising the University's European networking potential in this regard. St Andrews is now a member of Europaeum, a consortium of European universities, and of the European University Association. Horizon 2020 would be crucial to the University in terms of enabling international collaboration.

A further question from the floor related to any plans to ease the situation with regard to student accommodation. The Principal replied that the University was investing £70m to create an additional 900 beds and was also refurbishing all other existing accommodation. It would also like to work closely with private landlords to ensure that appropriate standards are met. Student accommodation would be an important consideration when assessing the University's current aspiration to grow student numbers to 10,000.

A final comment from the floor encouraged universities and HE institutions to reflect on the Brexit result in terms of the demographics of the vote and the importance, not just of widening access to post-school education, but of strengthening the connection between general society and those who have had the benefit of a post-school education. The Principal agreed and said that work in this area would be undertaken as part of the remit of the new Vice-Principal for International Strategy, Professor Brad MacKay of the School of Management, from 1 August 2017.

*The Chancellor thanked the Principal for her very comprehensive and extremely encouraging state of the nation address.*

##### **5. Update on University Governance issues – Mr Alastair Merrill, Vice-Principal (Governance)**

Mr Merrill intimated that his update would touch on two issues: the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 and the updated Code of Governance being reviewed by a steering committee under the auspices of Universities Scotland.

The HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 had come into force and institutions had been given until 31 December 2020 to be fully compliant with all of its provisions. This was quite a tight timescale given the amount of work that needs to be done. The principal areas for change were to the composition of Senate, where over 50% of members have to be elected, the composition of Court, and the election of a new post of Senior Lay Member who will discharge some of the functions of the Chair of Court. There is also a requirement to introduce a minor new change to the definition of academic freedom. At St Andrews, the Senate consists of all of the current and former professors of the University – some 230 members. Although Senate has not met as a body since 1995 when it devolved all its functions to a much smaller Academic Council of 45 members, it still constitutes the governing body as defined by the Act. For Senate to be more than 50% elected would therefore mean doubling its current membership of 230, which would present considerable challenges. Following extensive consultation across the University and with the professoriat, the plan, recently approved by both Court and the Academic Council, is to reconstitute Senate along the lines of the existing Academic Council, but with an additional 10 elected members, both staff and student, to meet the requirement for more than 50% to be elected.

On the composition of Court, Mr Merrill explained that the University will need to expand membership beyond the 25 recommended as good practice. Following a review of the existing assessors representing the various constituencies on Court, including General Council Assessors, Court had taken the view that these should not be reduced in number. This means that the University will have to expand the size of Court to accommodate, in particular, the additional two trade union nominees required by the Act.

Finally, on the election of the Senior Lay Member, Mr Merrill highlighted a number of issues linked to the overlap between the responsibilities of the Senior Lay Member and the ancient office of the Rector, who at St Andrews is the president of Court. There is a particular issue over deconflicting the election of the Senior Lay Member from that of the Rector, the latter being required by statute to take place every three years. Not only is there a risk of electoral fatigue, but there is also an issue for the student body in terms of timing any election to avoid other student elections, exams, study leave or graduation. The plan is for the election to take place in autumn 2019, a year before the next-but-one rectorial election in 2020.

Planning for the implementation of the Act had created considerable work, and the review of the Code of Governance, which has been running in parallel, has created even more. The intention was to establish a set of high-level principles for good practice. A draft has gone out for consultation and both the University Court and the Business Committee have submitted responses. On the positive side, the Code is somewhat shorter than the previous code and the seven high-level principles are eminently sensible. In particular, equality and diversity has its own distinct high-level principle, a long overdue and very important step. However, taken as a whole, the draft Code contains some 230 statements with which universities are required to demonstrate absolute compliance every year. Unless handled proportionately and with care, this could represent a significant bureaucratic and administrative burden, and increased standardisation and prescription, rather than delivering good governance. Mr Merrill concluded that the University is facing an increasingly complicated governance landscape and looked forward to working

constructively with the General Council on the various ordinance changes that would be coming forward.

Mr Merrill then invited questions from the floor. Questions related to concern over the overlap in responsibilities of the Senior Lay Member and those of both the Senior Governor and of the Rector. Concern was also expressed about the potential for elections to become politicised. Acknowledging that this was a genuine risk, Mr Merrill explained that the selection process would allow Court to define the skills, experience and criteria for the Senior Lay Member and to consider the suitability of potential candidates against these criteria. The Senior Governor position covers a much broader range of functions than the functions of the Senior Lay Member as described in the Act, and it is hoped that the revised Code will allow a degree of flexibility in how this is interpreted. It would be crucial for the criteria to be set very carefully to ensure that those selected as eligible to stand for election are credible candidates. In relation to the overlap with the traditional role of Rector, the Act stipulates that for those universities with a Rector, the role of the Rector would remain unchanged. In St Andrews, the Rector is the president of the Court, while the Senior Governor chairs Court discussions to do with strategy, finance and investment decisions and also discharges those responsibilities normally associated with the chair of a board. The responsibilities of the Senior Lay Member are more broadly to chair Court and to ensure the effectiveness of Court. The potential overlap will need to be managed carefully. A further question was raised as to whether it might be possible to conflate the position of Rector and Senior Governor. Mr Merrill explained that it was felt at St Andrews that expanding the electorate for the Rector to staff as well as students, and giving the Rector broader responsibilities, would fundamentally change the nature of the role of Rector as the students' champion. The Students' Association was also adamantly opposed to any change to the way in which the Rector is elected and to the role. Warm tribute was then paid, from the floor, to Catherine Stihler, who is coming to the end of her Rectorship. Catherine has worked extremely well with the Senior Governor on Court, transitioning seamlessly between each other's leadership. She was commended for her advice as an MEP on Brexit but especially for her role in representing students which she had carried out with grace and cheerfulness. The Chancellor added that an opportunity for a public tribute to Catherine had been given at the second of the previous day's graduation ceremony when she had received a wholly justified standing ovation.

**6. Joint Presentation by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sally Mapstone, and Professor of Management and Dean of the Faculties of Arts and Divinity, Professor Paul Hibbert, entitled "Excellence has no limits: investing in equality, diversity and inclusion".**

The Principal opened discussion of the University's agenda for equality, diversity and inclusion by saying that it reflects some essential characteristics of the University of St Andrews in striving to give all students and staff the opportunity, support and encouragement to excel and removing any barriers that prevent them from doing their very best. St Andrews is a modestly sized university in a small town that somehow manages to bring together people from all around the world together in ways that show that diversity and breadth of intellectual enquiry can go hand in hand and which, remarkably, from its international mix, forms one cohesive and warm community. However, the Principal acknowledged that the University has further to go in becoming a community that spans the full spectrum of diversity – St Andrews is not as ethnically

diverse as the UK as a whole. The University is determined to be a community in which everyone can flourish, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion or orientation, and one in which the message to potential students and staff is clear – that if they are talented they belong at St Andrews. The University will continue to develop as an increasingly diverse community that prizes hard work, hospitality and respect – shared values that underpin the University’s approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and which support its pursuit of excellence.

The Principal then introduced the Dean of Arts and Divinity, Professor Paul Hibbert, whom she had invited to lead on the Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze resubmission, to explain why this agenda is a priority issue for the University in relation to its ethos, its regulatory context and its effectiveness, and to outline the University’s current approach and future aspirations in this regard.

The Dean said that St Andrews is an institution that prides itself on attracting excellent staff and students and giving them the opportunity to be truly outstanding. Everyone who has succeeded in getting a place at St Andrews has earned the opportunity to do their best. The University also operates in a regulatory context where attention to gender equality, diversity and inclusion is a legal requirement, reflected in the publication of our Equality Mainstreaming Report earlier this year – a report which shows how we fulfil our obligations to the Scottish Government. This regulatory framework requires us to consider gender balance and ethnic diversity amongst both staff and students – matters that we would want to consider anyway – but it also requires us, and thus reinforces our practice in these areas, to take action to address imbalances, such as the disproportionately large percentage of male Computer Science students and the disproportionately high number of female Art History students. These are significant challenges which reflect the preferences of secondary school pupils and involve us in outreach work well beyond the confines of the University. There is also an expectation that the University and its constituent academic Schools will achieve Athena SWAN accreditation – a peer reviewed process that demonstrates that the University has a proactive and positive commitment to equality, particularly but not only, in relation to gender. The equality, diversity and inclusion agenda is also important for the University’s effectiveness. On the individual level, we need to have a working environment and systems for reward and recognition that allow everyone to do their best. On the collective level, the research shows that equality oriented organisations of this kind do better.

To illustrate how the University has been advancing this important agenda, the Dean explained how great progress had already been made with a programme for change. Revised processes for promotion, for example, allow all members of staff to play to their strengths and be appropriately rewarded, which is particularly important for women who generally contribute over and above expectations to administration and teaching and learning, which is of great value to the University but has not formerly allowed their careers to develop. Workload principles have been implemented that make fair opportunities to excel in research available to all research-active staff, while keeping the door open for those who wish to focus more intensively on teaching and learning. Other work on diversity and inclusion includes guidelines for the timing of meetings to help academics with caring responsibilities and the setting up of a Carer’s Fund to allow staff to travel on business with their dependants when necessary. Such initiatives have led to the University being recognised as a Carer Positive Employer. In addition, St Andrews is the only

Scottish university to have achieved LGBT Charter recognition – we have LGBT role models on the University's website and participate in PRIDE and other recognition events such as Bi Visibility Day. The University is also in the process of converting 54 toilet facilities to be gender neutral.

Turning from the impact of work already undertaken – and which must continue – to looking ahead to the future, the Dean highlighted the need to pay more attention to race and ethnicity. Next year, the University will be working hard to achieve Race Equality Charter recognition, which will help us to reflect on and remove any barriers standing in the way of minority ethnic staff and students. Another important goal will be to encourage and enable more women to take up senior leadership roles. To this end, the Principal has sponsored and shaped a new mentoring scheme for senior academic women, the Elizabeth Garrett Mentoring Programme, named in honour of the first woman to matriculate at the University of St Andrews but whose matriculation was subsequently rescinded by the University because she was a woman.

The second way in which the agenda is being advanced is through communication and culture. The University's professional communications team is on board with the need to show our growing diversity as they revise our website and printed materials. Around the campus, there are also still areas where our visual imagery needs to be more balanced. Considerable efforts are being made to ensure that the whole University is informed and engaged with this agenda: regular progress updates have been published for all academic staff; 16 equality and diversity related events have been held in the last academic year; regular working group and committee meetings held at both institutional and school level; and the website has made material clearly available. The University strongly believes that advancing equality, diversity and inclusion allows our community to thrive and excel – and research backs this up. We want our excellence and inclusivity to also be clear to the world and are investing in renewing our Institutional Athena SWAN accreditation (recognised across the UK university sector and now in international arenas too as a benchmark standard for equality) with a planned programme of accreditation for all Schools.

Turning now to culture and the role of research which, like teaching, remains a central part of the University's identity, the Dean highlighted a research fund, sponsored by the Principal, to support pilot-scale research on themes relevant to equality, diversity and inclusion. Collaborators from eight Schools are now working on five projects, ranging from an investigation into critical incidents in the career paths of women in academia through to research on correlations between diversity and participation in internships. This helps to demonstrate that this agenda involves our whole community.

The Dean then handed the discussion back to the Principal. In her closing remarks, the Principal addressed how everyone can help the University to succeed in advancing its equality, inclusion and diversity agenda: first by suggesting ways in which the University might do better with particular constituencies or creative ways in which it can communicate its hard work and successes; secondly, by supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in our own spheres of influence, both in General Council (where encouraging signs had already have been seen in the recent Business Committee elections) and in the world at large; and thirdly, by continuing to be

valued advocates and ambassadors for the University, the embodiment of the University's values of hospitality and mutual respect which are so closely associated with the ways in which the University is building a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Questions from the floor included a suggestion that consideration be given to re-establishing a Staff Club as a valuable way of integrating staff in an informal context. The Principal was in favour of providing opportunities for staff to mix outside their normal peer groups and this had been discussed at a meeting of mainly early career academics of the Young Academy of Scotland at a meeting held in St Andrews last semester. This would be discussed further. Another comment recognised that, despite all the trials and tribulations and the challenges, the University had come a very long way in a relatively short space of time in terms of addressing, for example, the absence of women in its governance and that we need to continue to encourage this diversity. The member was thanked by the Dean for recognising the efforts that had been made and for her own contribution in standing for Committee membership. Another member commented on the fact that progress had also been made since his student days in relation to the differing attitudes of some professors towards male and female students.

There being no further questions, the Chancellor thanked the Principal and the Dean of Arts and Divinity for their very substantial contributions.

#### **Any Other Competent Business**

In the absence of any motions having been received by the Registrar, the Chancellor invited any final questions. A question was raised as to whether the graduate tie was still in production. The understanding of those present was that it was still in production. A final suggestion was made in relation to there being a female equivalent of the tie, for example, a University scarf.

There being no further questions, the Chancellor drew the meeting to a close.

*Mr Alastair Merrill*  
**Registrar and Clerk to the General Council**