

Business Committee
of the General Council
of the University of St Andrews

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Ms Nicola Cowsill
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29 September 2016

Dear Ms Cowsill

CONSULTATION ON REVISION OF SCOTTISH CODE OF GOOD HE GOVERNANCE

Alastair Merrill, Vice-Principal (Governance and Planning), University of St Andrews, has passed on to me your email of 31 August. This contained your invitation to obtain the views of our “alumnus group” concerning the revision of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. As I am sure you know, General Council is our alumnus group and its Business Committee is charged with responding on its behalf. Thank you for asking us for our comments.

At a meeting on 24 September, the Business Committee approved the following response.

General Council representation on Court

The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 defines the method of appointment of governing board members from the staff and student constituencies. Given the role, defined in legislation, that General Councils are expected to play in the governance of the universities that have them, the Code should be amended to stipulate that there should also be two governing board members elected by the alumni association from among the alumni of the institution, if such an association exists, or otherwise nominated if no such association exists. Institutions are free to have more than two members so elected / nominated. Appropriate amendments to supporting guidelines should then be made.

Independent Court Members

Main Principle 10 of the Code should include definitions of the meaning of “clear” majority and of governing board members considered to be “independent” for the purposes of this Principle.

General

It appears that all 19, and varied, HE institutions are substantially complying with the Code, ie it is working. We are unaware of defects or deficiencies in the Code other than those highlighted above. We therefore advocate that as few further changes as possible are made to the Code.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch, preferably by email, if you need any further information.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

D Graham Wynd
Convener
Business Committee of the General Council
of the University of St Andrews