

Dr Abeer Eladany

I would like to join the court to have the opportunity to make a difference to how the University is governed and to gain experience of working at board level.

My leadership experience includes non-exec roles as a charity Trustee, local authority committee member and management of community projects. I lead the Parent Committee at Aberdeen City Music School and I am a long-term panel member on the Aberdeen City Council School Placings and Exclusions Appeals committee. I chair and lead the PNP (Priority Neighbourhood partnership) Central Aberdeen.

I have gained a wide experience of governance as a Trustee on a number of boards of directors such as SHMU (Station House Media Unit), Sound Scotland and Egypt Exploration Society (London and Cairo). I have joined many community projects to contribute to my local community (for example, member of Woodside Network).

I take every opportunity to expand my knowledge and experience. I joined the Clarsach Society Branch committee and I support the group activities and aims to advance the clarsach and its music, and to preserve its place in the national life of Scotland and in the wider world harp community.

I am a member of the Empire Slavery and Scotland's Museums which is a national project, sponsored by the Scottish Government, to make recommendations on how Scotland's involvement in empire, colonialism, and historic slavery can be addressed using museum collections and spaces.

Throughout my career I have consistently championed the importance of equality and diversity and inclusion.

I have experience in evaluating and monitoring the performance of the organisations that I support, in a constructively critical manner, whilst mindful of the boundary between governance and management. I am committed to the highest standards of governance and have the courage to exercise independent judgement; I am also committed to furthering the values of higher education and the mission of the University of Aberdeen.

I am particularly interested in prioritising the University's work on innovation and enterprise, research excellence, and the wellbeing of staff, both professional and academic.

If elected, I would be committed to working with the Court members and the University's community of staff, students and stakeholders, to realise its ambitions to transform lives through teaching, research, and civic engagement and to work towards achieving the vision and ambition of the 2040 strategy.

I ask for your vote.

Iain Grant

Why I'm Standing

My attachment to the University goes back to 2000, with the start of my undergraduate studies. In 2005, I took a four-week contract in Registry in a clerical role, and since then have worked my way to where I am now, as Head of Strategic Planning, and of the Project Management Office. Over the course of this journey, I've enjoyed many different roles, working closely with staff at every level. I've got great experience and understanding of how the University works, and I am clear and passionate about the hugely important role played by Professional Services, centrally and in Schools – including all administrative, technical and support staff. We are both invaluable and indispensable, something I want to articulate, promote and represent; to make a real, positive difference on behalf of us all, particularly as we go through a financially challenging time, here and across the wider sector.

Our Value

And our work is hugely important: you *cannot* have a successful University without successful Professional Services. In recent years, the University has achieved outstanding NSS, retention and league table outcomes. We've opened campuses abroad, delivered new state of the art buildings, transformed our digital environment, increased our online provision, re-grown our research income, and, through outstanding marketing and student recruitment, driven significant growth in student numbers, with a 61% increase in tuition fee income. None of this would be possible without the work of Professional Services, in every School and in every Directorate.

My Commitment to You

If elected, I will represent you in the right way; firmly advocating for Professional Services staff and our interests, particularly in such matters as workload capacity, workload reduction, and resource allocation – of added importance when facing financial constraints. I will look to ensure that workloads are fair and reasonable, that resources are allocated proportionately, and that we have the tools we need to deliver first-in-class services. This will require a voice to articulate for *us*; someone willing to speak truth, and where appropriate, to challenge those with the authority to make decisions that affect us all. That will be part of my job on Court, on your behalf, if you trust me with your vote.

Finally, I want to stress that I am not standing for myself. I am standing for *you*, and if elected, I will not seek re-election at the end of my term, but will make way for a fresh voice with fresh ideas; providing opportunity and ensuring diversity in our representation over time. However, if you lend me your vote for this term, I will make sure *your* voice is heard. I will be available, and I will listen to you. I will hold regular surgeries and Court briefing meetings throughout the year, giving you the opportunity to raise issues or concerns that affect *you*. And where I can, to whatever extent I can, I will do everything in my gift to make sure your concerns are articulated at the very highest level.

Rose Lyne

The University has played a significant role throughout my adult life; firstly as a student and intern, then as a graduate trainee, and now as the institution's Net Zero and Emissions Manager.

During this time, I have been instilled with a passion to learn, to excel, and to actively contribute; key attributes that we endeavour for all of our students to attain. My passion for sustainability was sparked during my time as an intern within Estates & Facilities where I saw first-hand the operational and sector-wide challenges being faced. But I also recognised the University's fantastic potential, from the ideas and research furthered by our academic staff, to the commitment and ingenuity of our professional services teams.

I want to bring my passion for sustainability, as well as for the University and its staff, to Court. As a University, we cannot underestimate the vital role sustainability thinking will play in our operational future. Meanwhile Prospective students are placing an ever-greater importance on a University's environmental commitments and impact when selecting where to study. To ensure we remain an attractive choice, we must be seen to hold true to the commitments we made in our Aberdeen 2040 strategic plan.

As sustainability is a core component of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy, I want to help be the voice of those commitments by providing insight for our strategic direction. The journey to achieving Net Zero before 2040 will require an immense collaborative effort and I feel becoming a member of Court will provide me with invaluable insight as to the wider challenges facing colleagues throughout the University.

Sustainability and Net Zero are significant challenges, both for us as an institution and the sector as a whole. Part of my role as Net Zero and Emissions Manager is to look not just at short-term plans and their expected impact, but also ahead - to 2040 and beyond. If elected to Court, I will aim to foster the development of forward-thinking solutions to our time-critical issues while ensuring that the University remains aligned with its long-term ambitions.

Ms Megan McFarlane

Hello! I'm Megan and I'm asking for your vote in the upcoming Court elections, of which I'm standing to become the non-academic representative.

A little bit about me... I'm passionate about Aberdeen! I'm a Peterhead quine and I love the North East of Scotland and the University of Aberdeen. I graduated from here with a degree in Politics and International Relations in 2012. I've worked in various roles in student recruitment since then, and I'm now the Head of Engagement and Conversion, a job I love. I'm returning to work in July after having a little boy in August. You may have seen me wandering about campus with a pram as I only live 5 minutes away. If you see me again, please do come and talk to me!

Over the years working in student recruitment, it has been an absolute privilege to get to travel the world and shout about how amazing this campus, city and country is. From Kazakhstan, to Malaysia, to Nigeria and many places in between, meeting folk at a fair and then seeing them arrive on campus has been a joy. My job is now office based, but I still try and translate that passion for Aberdeen into our conversion communications, and in all of our interactions with students before they arrive.

Over the years I've amassed quite a bit of committee experience at UoA, and latterly set up and chaired a Scotland-wide external committee of conversion professionals. I also acted as the Scottish representative on the UK-wide UCAS Marketing Group. I regularly work closely with staff at all levels and across all Schools and Directorates, and particularly enjoy projects that bring us all together, such as the annual Clearing campaign and Open Days. Prior to having my son, I volunteered as an Independent Prison Monitor, supporting prisoners in HMP Grampian as they navigated life inside prison and prepared for their release. This was hugely challenging and rewarding at the same time. By advocating for some very vulnerable people, despite their crimes, I have become an effective and empathetic communicator, and genuinely do my best for the people I represent. I can take all these skills with me to Court where I will do my best to understand the challenges faced by **all** non-academic staff and will articulate your views clearly and honestly.

If you would like to find out more about me or ask me any questions, please do reach out to me at megan.mcfarlane@abdn.ac.uk I'd love to hear from you.

Mr Martin Puentes

The first time I heard about the university court was a few weeks ago when someone asked me for some milk for their meeting occurring in the building across my work place. It stroked me as something interesting but that I may not get the chance to get involved any time soon. Little did I know that soon after the election was announced and here I am giving it a try in hopes of being part of something that can actually give my opinion and voice actual influence and value regarding the university.

With that being said I think I would be a good candidate because I'm an individual that thrives taking important decisions and I really believe in listening to all opinions and perspectives at the moment of discussing any subject. I would love to take part in some of the processes involved in taking decisions related to the improvement and benefit of the university as well as to see the discussion behind them and be part of it.

Although I've only been part of the staff since September last year I have come to see many aspects of the working environment and student life of the university since then. Like this I gained knowledge on how things are for students on their daily lives as well as how other departments work.

As a person that works in one of the cafes of the university and deal with students and staff all the time I get to see and hear most of the opinions and grievances (sometimes) of them regarding the university. This means that, as part of the catering services I get to have a very comprehensive view of opinions and perceptions regarding the university. This is definitely a useful tool at the moment of taking different decisions or being part of the discussion in regards of this institution.

I also have broad experience working in environments where important decisions affected employees and the running of a company. Having experience as Assistant Manager for a restaurant showed me the importance of the decisions taken by management, supervising breakfast for a hotel thought me the difficulties for staff that work in shifts that have their own problem for being at unfriendly hours and even working as a general assistant for a care home where all my actions had a strong effect on the people that lived there.

In other aspects I believe that as a person coming from a different country and having lived in several before here has given me a very broad perspective when it comes to my opinions and ideas this added to the fact that I'm a father of 2 has me always considering all possibilities to achieve the most positive result possible.

As a final comment I would like to say that I really hope that I get to be part of this and if I do I will work my hardest to make the best possible of it in that role.

Mrs Karen Scaife

I almost didn't apply for my job at the University - imposter syndrome chirping in my ear. I feel a little like that writing this statement today. But here I am 17 years, 3 different roles, 10 offices and 2 maternity leaves later and very glad that I didn't let the imposter syndrome win.

Seeing our students cross the graduation stage each year and hold aloft their certificates with pride makes me smile. A precious moment of joy for them to celebrate their epic achievement. It also reminds me of why I come to work each day – to help create an environment for them to achieve their goals. The other reason is the people I get to work with. And it's that staff community that inspired me to put myself forward for Court. Providing a voice for our community on Court is an incredible opportunity and something that, with 17 years of experience working here, think that I am well placed to do.

All of my working career has centred around engaging people and supporting communities whether it's been through city centre regeneration; international, national and community events; regional tourism; alumni relations, student engagement and now staff and student wellbeing. I have experience of being on a variety of institutional committees and working groups, working collaboratively and engaging with key external stakeholders. I consider myself to be proactive, innovative and an instigator. I have spearheaded a number of projects such as the student communication working group, student communication policy, BeWell week and the creation of an online space for our staff community during Covid all of which contribute to Aberdeen 2040.

Making the UOA a great place to work is something I am passionate about and work hard to contribute to in my day-to-day job as Wellbeing and Engagement Manager. I led on the development of the University's Wellbeing strategy and am currently overseeing the delivery of the action plan to achieve our objectives. A key aspect of that is culture change – striving for an environment where we have a healthy work life balance and are empowered and supported to prioritise our wellbeing. Being on Court will give me an opportunity to influence that further ensuring that the staff, the beating heart of the University, are considered at the very highest level.

Coming out of Covid and into a cost of living crisis in a demanding and fast paced world - never has there been more need to prioritise our wellbeing. Having an opportunity to ensure our mental and physical wellbeing is top of the agenda in strategic discussion is vital and something very close to my heart.

Mr William Tocher

I am very proud to work at and be part of the University of Aberdeen and would appreciate being considered for the Non-Academic post in Court. Since arriving at the University, I have become fully immersed in the diversity and values of this organisation and feel I have much to contribute to this institution.

I am a highly motivated team player who always supports colleagues and friends. My positive and professional attitude, coupled with my proactive approach to my current role means I am always looking for opportunities to improve my knowledge, understanding and self-awareness. Being part of the Court would be a great opportunity for me, and benefit my department, as this would enhance my understanding of current and future challenges facing the university community. I feel that my keen eye for detail and considerable life experiences across a wide spectrum of fields would assist me in supporting the work of the Court.

I am a diligent employee and a good communicator who can be direct on occasion but am always respectful of other people's views. I value the opinions of others and believe that, through informed debate, we can make improvements to our community. As an advocate for equality, diversity, mental health and wellbeing I am driven to improve the working environment and am never afraid to challenge the norms when I feel a difference can be made.

Having dedicated over 30 years to working in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, I fulfilled a variety of roles including operational shift management, emergency command and control, fire safety enforcement, community safety engagement and secondments to the Prince's Trust and the former Grampian Police Road Casualty Reduction unit. I approached each of these roles and opportunities with enthusiasm and a drive to learn as much as possible.

Being a passionate advocate for young people of all cultures, backgrounds and learning abilities I currently volunteer as the lead for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Youth Volunteer Scheme (Fire Cadets) at Peterhead. This gives me the opportunity to provide young people with an experience of the Fire and Rescue Service, teamwork, problem solving etc. I firmly believe that investing in young people from all communities and giving them the platform to grow and develop can only enhance their opportunities in life.

There are areas and subjects that I fully appreciate I will not be conversant with such as financial security issues affecting the university now and, in the future. I am, however, a quick learner and if I don't understand something I will research the subject and try to find out more information; I am always proactive in asking for guidance. I am willing to learn and will always endeavour to contribute to the further development of the wider community.

I feel that I would be an asset and bring a fresh outlook to the Court and the university community.