

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024

Niall Bradley

The University of Edinburgh provides opportunities that can transform the lives of individuals, and our work contributes to making the world a better place.

I have worked at the University for more than 20 years, and since my first role attracting students who would not normally consider Edinburgh a place for them, I have engaged with a very broad range of staff, students and partners across our University community.

I have worked with Professional Services staff across the three Colleges and the three Professional Services Groups in a range of roles in Student Recruitment and Admissions, the College of Science & Engineering Recruitment & Admissions and in Communications and Marketing.

While my work has focussed primarily on sharing the opportunities that Edinburgh offers and the good work that we do, it has required me to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including academic staff, professional services staff, prospective students, parents, students, alumni, research colleagues and partners across other organisations.

This has helped develop my understanding of the contribution the whole University community makes to our continued success as well as gaining an understanding into the issues and challenges we face, and would enable me to objectively represent a wide range of views on Court.

As a member of Court, I would seek to bring my experience and understanding of the needs of staff and students and, building on my work in CAM, emphasise the importance of listening to and understanding our internal and external stakeholders.

My current role is focussed on enhancing and communicating our reputation to ensure that we remain an attractive destination and I remain committed to attracting students, staff and partners from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible.

Outside of work I enjoy spending time on supporting and developing young people: acting as a leader in the Scout movement, chairing my local High School parent council, and serving on the board of a charity whose mission is to advance effective parental and family engagement, inclusion, and representation. I believe these roles demonstrate my values and integrity as well my commitment and desire to provide and improve opportunities for all, an ethos I would also bring to Court.

I am proud to work for a civic institution firmly embedded in its local community, that has such a positive impact locally, nationally and internationally. I would seek to support efforts to further strengthen our links with our local community and to highlight our commitments to create a more sustainable world through our research, teaching, partnerships and operations.

If elected, I would strive to use my experience and understanding of the role that we all play in the success of the University, to help achieve our vision, ask relevant questions and represent our whole community of staff, students and our partners within the University, locally and worldwide.

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David Brook

I have been employed by the University for over 23 years in a variety of roles. My current role as Head of Support Services within the Estates Department sees me responsible for the estate support services required to help the University function, many of which happen often unnoticed but are critically important – cleaning, servitorial, security, mail, transport, waste and furniture. This was never more so than during the COVID pandemic when we all continued to attend work on campus throughout lockdowns to ensure our buildings were maintained and continued to function for research purposes initially and teaching latterly. I believe I understand well the challenges faced by our lower graded staff and I also believe I would be a good advocate for them. This represents the first reason why I wish to be the Professional Services Staff Member on Court.

The University has played a huge part in my life over the last near quarter of a century. I met my wife, Jacqui Brook, here nearly 20 years ago, we were married in the Playfair Library and had our two beautiful children through IVF which was possible in part due to medical research carried out at our university. The importance of the university in my family's life represents the second reason I wish to play a wider part through becoming a member of court.

Whilst I have experience of operations within Estates across all colleges and support groups, Jacqui also has 20 years' experience working as Director of Professional Services within CAHSS, for the last 12 years in LLC. This gives me the benefit of seeing a view of the university from within a school and we often debate internal and external issues impacting the University. This was particularly so during the COVID pandemic and during the continued challenges presented by the implementation of People and Money. We probably should get out more.....but I believe this gives me a wider view of the impact of issues on professional services staff and my offer of a BOGOF deal represents my third reason.

I was educated at the local primary and high school in Stranraer and was the first member of my family on either side ever to go to university which I believe gives me a real understanding of the importance of our work in widening participation and our goal to achieve a more equitable university. My fourth reason.

And finally, I believe in the importance of the ability of staff and students to exercise free speech on any issue on campus, as long as views are expressed with kindness, decency and respect for others. I believe there is a silent majority view which does not always have a voice and I would like to speak up for that staff group. My fifth and final reason.

I would relish the opportunity, and see it as a privilege, to represent my colleagues, peers and many friends at the highest level in the University and would be very grateful for your support.

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Anne-Marie Coriat

This is a challenging, but exciting time for universities and higher education.

As the complexity of the environment we work and study in continues to increase, institutions need to work creatively, bring teams together and set transformative ambitions that build on strengths.

At the University of Edinburgh I believe this means building a strong interdisciplinary community where professional services, teaching and research staff all feel valued. It's an easy vision to describe and hard, but not impossible, to deliver.

Through its stewardship of the University, Court has a vital role to play in creating an environment where all our staff and students can contribute their strengths to deliver the university's ambitions. I'd like to use what I've learnt in my many years navigating funding, research, and higher education challenges to represent our professional services community on Court.

I joined the University of Edinburgh in January 2022 as Registrar for the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM).

I began my career as a technician in university and hospital laboratories before doing a PhD on development in the American alligator. I am extremely proud of this background. Working as a technician and organising international field work taught me the importance of understanding what each individual brings to their role regardless of grade or experience, the importance of inclusivity and of the strength of a team that works well together.

I have continued supporting the development of university and national policy for technical careers (I am on the UK Technicians Commitment Steering Group and the UK Talent Commission).

Before Edinburgh, I worked for UK research funders across disciplines including as Director of Skills and Infrastructure for the Medical Research Council, Chair of the Research Councils UK Research Group (now UKRI) and Head of the Wellcome Trust Research Environment Team. I've seen huge change in that time and how expectations of what Universities can deliver has changed too. I'm proud to have been part of the national shift in policy on research culture.

I have also been a member of Council for the Royal Veterinary College, a Trustee of the UK Council for Graduate Education and co-Chair of the Research-on-Research Institute. I'd like to help us navigate our future by using this experience as a member of Court.

At work I like to understand the root cause of problems, combined with pragmatism, to best find solutions that lead to change. I like to work collaboratively; including diverse perspectives may take longer but in my experience the learning others share is often what leads to the best way forward, sustainable change and transformation.

How I work is as important as what I work on; honesty, accountability, courtesy and fairness are my guiding principles. My current role demands good stewardship to create positive environments for our teams and our partners. I'd take the same approach if I were elected to represent our community on University Court.

Thank you for reading my statement. I'm delighted to have the opportunity to stand to represent you.

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Tracey Edward

As a member of the Professional Services community, I am passionate about people - everyone deserves to be heard and valued, people need to be recognised and respected. Changes should be made to enhance what we do in a way which is sustainable and fiscally responsible. I believe I possess the skills, knowledge, and perspective necessary to provide a balanced assessment of the choices essential for strategic oversight and stewardship. This has motivated me to pursue the Professional Services Staff Member for The University Court.

I am a seasoned finance professional, ACMA qualified, with an MBA from The University of Manchester and 20+ years' experience in industry. I've worked in a variety of roles over my career from Treasurer for Children's Charity to executing projects where my contributions delivered value creation and operational efficiencies. I've advised CEO's, governance boards and Senior Leaders on investment proposals, prioritisation of strategic programmes and cost transformation options. With my background in industry, balanced with my knowledge in Higher Education, I'm able to provide a fresh perspective to the challenges we face.

Since joining The University of Edinburgh in 2022, I have been a member of the Finance Leadership Team representing the Colleges' interests. I am also a member of the Student Scholarships Group (subsidiary of the Student Recruitment and Fee Strategy Group), to consider how scholarships and bursaries can be deployed to widen participation and diversification of the student population – key strategic priorities for The University of Edinburgh. In June 2023, I became a Board Member for Accommodation, Catering and Events subsidiary.

My current role is Head of Finance for College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The remit of the role is broad from engaging with Senior Leaders in Schools/Finance to following up with Admissions Team on student recruitment to facilitating sessions at the Extended Leadership Group. I keep abreast of issues and challenges facing the sector and use this insight to identify solutions to minimise the impact. The pace of change, the geopolitical environment and operating model of Higher Education institutions highlight some of the risks to navigate if we are to be successful in executing change to deliver The University of Edinburgh's 2030 Strategy.

I am extremely proud to be part of the University of Edinburgh. I have the energy and enthusiasm to navigate the journey ahead as we enter this period of change. If successfully elected, I will approach decision-making with balance as a logical thinker and use evidence from data to consider a range of possible outcomes. A Professional Services Member of Court must be able to provide unbiased and rational evidence and make decisions that support the interests from staff, students, funding bodies, alumni, and the wider community.

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Peter J. Green-Sargent

Throughout my working life I have represented people at varying levels of forum through debate and negotiation. I have been honoured and privileged to do so and gained substantial success in safeguarding their interests. My elected roles of shop steward, convenor, chairman and director have given me invaluable experience at times of change and uncertainty. The turbulence of the 1980's politically and economically affected many institutions and households the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, At that time it was important then to seek balance and fairness during the implementation of deregulation and privatisation. In many respects since covid these times have once again reappeared and the University must be prepared for the challenges that lie ahead for both students and employees. Additionally, the impact of covid on the University must be re-evaluated. I believe that I have the necessary expertise and experience to facilitate the University and all stakeholders in seeking certainty and direction for the future.

I have written and submitted various papers on the Local Government Superannuation Scheme, as Chairman of the Joint Consultative Panel of Lothian Regional Council representing 25,000 members of the Fund, including a live debate held in St, Giles Cathedral on the "Ownership of a Pension Surplus" I have campaigned at national level seeking pension benefit improvements, Throughout 1984 I was the Scottish Trade Union spokesperson for Road Passenger Transport and led a deputation and lobby at Westminster against the 1985 Transport Act. In 1992 I was elected as worker director for Lothian Buses, representing over 2,000 employees, serving four terms of office resigning on the issue of Tram Introduction for Edinburgh and the escalating costs of an unmonitored project.

In recent times I have experienced the effect of change implemented by the Scottish Government to our educational system involving qualifications and funding. At college level amalgamation took place locally between Telford College, Stevenson College and Jewel and Esk Valley College rebranded as Edinburgh College. This was deemed necessary to avoid huge funding deficits and of course compulsory redundancies. However, many courses previously offered disappeared affecting the curriculum on offer. Scottish Universities will not in my opinion be insulated from a similar set of circumstances with many now experiencing financial stress tests. The way ahead at Edinburgh University is to be prepared for all eventualities seeking the highest standards of excellence and reputational advancement protecting all stakeholders for future years. It would be an honour to represent you in the days ahead.

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024

Lauren Johnston-Smith

I joined the University in 2010, working for seven years in CMVM's Graduate School before moving in 2017 to Information Services Group, where I remain in the role of Online Learning Marketing Strategy Manager. With a University career in two quite distinct parts of our institution, and my current role representing courses and degrees from all three Colleges, I bring to this role 14 years of experience and a robust understanding of our organisational structures.

I've had a successful career in student recruitment marketing, working in both postgraduate and undergraduate, on-campus and online, home and overseas. I currently lead the marketing strategy for online learning and can bring insight and knowledge about lifelong learning and the role that the University plays in providing open learning for all. I have a solid understanding of the application process, student needs, academic expectations and recruitment targets. I've been involved in various touchpoints on the student journey over my career, from high school fairs and open days to websites and induction events. Prior to joining the University, I was head of marketing and press at the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and worked in student recruitment at ECA when it was still a 'small specialist institution' and as a marketer in the visual arts.

I have been involved in a variety of University-wide working groups over the years and am currently a member of the Student Recruitment Management Group and the Short Courses Strategy Group. I work in a multidisciplinary team in Information Services Group and am connected to a wide range of professional services staff, from learning technologists and web designers to project managers and librarians. My extensive experience of and insight into the wider workings of the non-teaching community would empower me to give voice to as wide a constituency as possible at Court.

Colleagues who know me will I'm sure attest to the fact that I've a hard-won reputation for speaking up and for championing ideas that I believe in. These are valuable qualities for this position on Court. Like our University, I am willing to be ambitious and bold and to act with integrity.

I'm standing for election too because I believe that Court membership should be gender-balanced, particularly in an institution where 56% of professional services staff are female and where female students outnumber male. Women hold less than 40% of the University Court positions at present. It's vital that female representation on Court doesn't retreat any further and that we achieve gender balance on this group as soon as possible.

The University Court has the power to make positive impact and change in many areas, from diversity and inclusion to student and staff wellbeing. My broad knowledge of the University, my leadership skills, and my ability to communicate boldly makes me ideally suited to be your representative on Court. If elected, I will make a positive contribution to the governance of our University and will strive to build a supportive and excellent environment in which staff and learners can thrive.

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Owen Macdonald

Owen Macdonald has held the position of GIS Support Officer in the School of GeoSciences since 2005. The role involves a mix of technical expertise, practical teaching, application of theoretical concepts, organisational skills and supervision of student research. Owen provides support primarily for a cluster of GIS and Earth Observation MSc programmes within the School, but also a listening and consultancy service to a variety of GIS users as well as closely working with IT to ensure software delivery and support to students and staff.

During his time in post, he has supervised numerous MSc dissertations, organised dissertation conferences, most recently in the form of an island-based fieldtrip, ran a nationally significant geospatial seminar series for 13 years, has contributed to a number of research projects and teaching initiatives, and has witnessed the often-significant changes in the geospatial sector over that time together with the corresponding response by the GIS/EO Masters programmes. He has also seen the nature of professional services strengthened and indeed professionalised over that period.

As a member of the school's professional services staff but outside of the core School teams such as IT, Teaching Organisation or Finance the role offers a unique insight into various aspects of university life and work at the academic-professional services interface.

As a member of the School's Athena Swan Committee Owen has contributed to the improvement of working conditions for colleagues, particularly in more marginalised or non-core areas. He has also taken part in many Learning and Development as well as technical training events to inform his practice including being a member of pilot and early cohorts on both the Edinburgh Teaching Award scheme and data science training via the IS Developing Your Data Skills programme alongside many different staff members and roles. Owen would relish the opportunity to apply some of these skills in a practical application, making a real contribution to the work of the University.

Owen is Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and the Royal Geographical Society and was twice nominated for a EUSA Teaching Award and for Exceptional Service by the Association for Geographic Information.

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024

Derek MacLeod

Having worked at the University for almost 16 years, I have built up significant experience working across the breadth of the institution and I'm keen to utilise this as the Professional Services Staff Member on University Court.

I've held a number of roles in Edinburgh Global – initially working in the International Office Recruitment and Development team across Africa, the Middle East and North America, before becoming the Regional Director for Africa. It was during this time that I also served as the Secretary and then Chair of the Scottish Universities International Group (SUIG), a group that brings all Scottish universities together to work collectively and collaboratively on the global stage.

At the end of 2019 I moved into my current role as Head of the Global Partnerships and Community team. This involves working across the University to support and oversee our portfolio of global partners, as well as working with colleagues internally to ensure appropriate governance and that the University engages responsibly – mitigating risks of our global engagement. Achieving this would not be possible without engaging with colleagues across all three Colleges as well as with colleagues across a range of services in USG, CSG, ISG and the Finance Directorate. The interdependency between internal partners is crucial in delivering impactful partnerships for the University, and it is one of the areas of my role that I enjoy working on most.

I was brought up in Edinburgh before moving away for 8 years to study in both the University of St Andrews and at Emory University in Atlanta, before living and working in Liberia and London. After spending many years telling everyone how great Edinburgh was, I then moved back to Edinburgh in 2008 to work at the University and promote the University and City internationally. I'm very passionate about Edinburgh as a place to live and work, and I recognise the significant role that the University plays in the city – and as a result I particularly enjoy currently sitting on the University's Community Board and the City of Edinburgh's International Group.

As well as working at the University, I also completed an MSc in Africa and International Development in the School of Social and Political Science in 2011 – which helped me to see the University from a completely different perspective.

Many years ago, I was also fortunate to sit on the University Court of the University of St Andrews, as a Sabbatical Officer in the Students' Association. I feel that this experience will also stand me in good stead for a similar role here in Edinburgh too.

I believe that I'm approachable and level-headed and would be a good representative of diverse views from across different professional services at the University. While there is a wide range of complex issues that the University currently faces – within our institution, within the Higher Education sector, and also internationally – I'm optimistic that by working constructively together we can improve the institution for all.

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024

Sarah McAllister

Against the age of the University, our time in the institution is relatively short. However, we should prioritise our student and staff experience to leave a legacy for the next generation of staff. We will not be able to make a difference for our students or staff if we do not feel valued, recognised and rewarded. I am seeking re-election as there is more work to be done in the role, particularly, in relation to the staff experience at the University of Edinburgh, ensuring it remains at the forefront of the Court agenda as our governing body.

Strategic projects are vital for our institution to respond to the uncertain landscape of higher education; however, we must learn from recent experience in relation to resourcing and implementation. Since being elected in April 2020, in the midst of the Covid Pandemic, I have worked with fellow elected members to develop a collective voice especially within the shadow of People and Money (P&M). We came together as elected members to insist Court acknowledge and discuss the pain and work to find solutions. My engagement and scrutiny continues and resulted in the publication of the external review of P&M in December 2023.

The University has been pushed in recent years in ways we could not predict or plan, and we must use these experiences to reflect and become resilient in the face of a challenging future. Part of this is continuing to scrutinise, question and ensure accountability in our governing bodies' decision making. Our institutional staff surveys tell us staff are feeling fatigued through system changes, high workloads, the Covid Pandemic, changing student expectations, and most recently, the marking and assessment boycott. I want to continue to push for tangible actions as an outcome of the surveys to ensure staff feel heard and changes are made. This has included the approval of the Grade Scale Review as a starting point for recognition.

In my 19 years at the University, I have held a number of roles that allow me to engage with professional services at all grades across schools, colleges and services at all levels. And I bring those reflections to each Court meeting. I fully engage in the role and attend all Court meetings and sit on two Court sub committees. I have also developed good working relationships with our internal and external members of Court to extend the understanding of the experience of our professional services staff.

Since joining the University of Edinburgh in 2005, I have progressed my leadership career in various roles, in Schools and in Professional Services, including Postgraduate Administrator in Public Health Sciences (2005-2009), Teaching Organisation Manager in the School of Chemistry (2008-2009 secondment), Teaching Organisation Manager and subsequently Head of Student Services in the School of GeoSciences (2009-2017), Head of Operations and Projects, and Assistant Director, in the Institute of Academic Development (2018-2019), and Head of Student Support Operations in Registry Services which includes responsibility for Fees, Scholarships, Student Immigration and Extensions and Special Circumstances (2019-present).

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024

Katie Nicoll Baines

I have been a member of staff at the University of Edinburgh since April 2017 and an Edinburgh resident since birth. I was initially employed as a research fellow in computational biology at the Institute of Genetics and Cancer. After learning more about careers in researcher development and researcher career support I transitioned in 2019 to a professional services role as a project manager (based in the School of Chemistry) for an EPSRC Inclusion Matters grant tasked with investigating barriers to career progression in the engineering and physical sciences. Alongside managing a complex interdisciplinary team, I researched, designed, and supported the implementation of interventions designed to make hiring practices more inclusive as well as a secondment with UKRI to understand barriers associated with accessing research funding. In 2022 I took on the role of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager for the Future Leaders Fellows Development Network, based in the Institute for Academic Development. This experience has enabled me to understand the complex nature of research careers and the challenges associated with improving research culture. I have developed strategic methods for approaching system change in complex organisations and recognise the importance of critical friends in shaping innovation. I have networked with colleagues across research support services and with researchers in a variety of disciplines within the University and beyond. I have retained links to my colleagues in the IGC and contribute to their Science Insights programme, supporting secondary school pupils to understand opportunities to study at the university and promoting the importance of inclusive research environments. I am also an experienced facilitator and training developer and regularly consult with research departments on their research design practices and am supporting development of inclusive research design principles at UKRI.

I think my transition from research to professional services staff gives me a unique insight into being a good professional services staff member. I understand the importance of working across these roles and how we must work in collaboration with equal recognition to ensure our success as a leading research institution. I have experience sitting on the University EDI committee through which I have gained insight into the breadth of work across our organisation beyond my extensive experience in the research environment arena. I have had the opportunity to collaborate with EUSA student representatives in my role as co-chair of the Staff Pride Network and contribute to initiatives and policy designed to foster LGBT+ inclusion at the University.

I am a champion for the importance of diversity and creating environments that foster belonging that enable people to thrive and contribute to the University. I also recognise the position of importance that the University holds in the city of Edinburgh and that we have a civic responsibility to the city that is our home. I believe my experience and ethos makes me ideally positioned to be a good professional services member for University court.

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024

Ritchie Somerville

I am writing to express my interest in the role of Professional Services Staff Member on the University Court. With a career that has straddled public service and academia, I believe I am well-suited to make a positive contribution to the Court, and by extension the University.

Throughout my career, I have demonstrated a keen ability to drive effective delivery of work, bringing people together, ensuring the work is done to a clear purpose, fostering positive relationships. In my current role as Deputy Director of EPCC, I have successfully contributed to the effective delivery of the Data Driven Innovation Programme, and in my previous role as Head of Strategy for the DDI Programme, in CSG, operated at the interface of the University with its civic partners and government, both UK and Scottish, ensuring that the opportunity for the University to benefit from and contribute to civic partnerships was realised, recognising the contributions of all staff at the university in these efforts.

I have had the opportunity to work with colleagues from across all the budget areas of the University and recognise the diversity and complexity of the University and see this as an asset to realising the opportunities to further the core pillars that the University rests on of education, research, and innovative societal and commercial impact.

I recognise that this role is to be representative of Professional Services at the University and I commit to performing the role in this context, seeking to represent the perspective of professional services colleagues across the University, and to make contributions on behalf of this community in the University to the setting broad strategic policy and objectives, approving plans intended to achieve these strategic objectives, ensuring that the University's key practices and procedures are sound and robust and ensuring that the University's overall performance is monitored and challenged as required.

I am particularly drawn to this role on the University Court because of the opportunity to contribute to an inclusive and supportive environment for all at the University. I am excited about the prospect to contribute to the Court's strategic planning and decision-making processes, and I am confident that my experience and passion will enable me to make a meaningful contribution.

I am a strong advocate for delivery through diverse teams and firmly believe in the transformative power of collaboration to achieve the outcomes desired to sustain and grow the reputation and standing of the University. I have previous experience of being on the Board of a Charity, operating as a Company Limited by Guarantee, and understand the OSCR requirements.

In conclusion, I am excited about the possibility of serving on the University Court and am confident that I can bring a positive perspective and valuable insights to the role. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the continued success of the University.

Thank you for considering my application.

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024

Zoe Stephens

Who am I?

My name is Zoe Stephens, I am Director of Estates Business Services and I have worked for the University for eight years. In my role I deliver a range of professional services within the Estates Department. I also work closely with teams across the wider professional services network e.g., HR, Finance, CAM, ISG and believe that I understand the many opportunities and challenges experienced by professional services colleagues across the University.

What would I do as the Professional Services Staff Member at University Court?

As required by the role, and using my broad experience, I would look to support, advise and challenge the University in the development of strategy, taking the final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the University and ensuring effective corporate governance.

What is important to me?

The complex and volatile world we live in at the moment needs incredible organisations like the University of Edinburgh to successfully navigate the many challenges we face.

To ensure we set the right direction and make the right decisions it is essential that the skills, knowledge and talents of all our communities are considered and embraced. I believe governance that truly recognises the power of inclusive representation will result in a more successful organisation for all, and will generate even greater benefits to the world.

To underpin this, we must demonstrate honesty, integrity and transparency throughout the decision-making process, and this is something that I take seriously and am committed to.

What experience do I have?

I have worked at the University for eight years and have held my current post for two years.

With my fantastic team, I deliver Business Administration, Communications, Governance, IT services, People & Change, and Records & Information Management.

I am pragmatic, experienced in complex change programmes, have a good understanding of a wide range of professional services, and understand the challenges professional services colleagues encounter when asked to translate strategy into reality.

I also sit, or have sat, on a number of cross-University groups and committees:

Currently I am a member of:

- The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, and the related CSG EDI Committee;
- The Community Board;
- The Strategic Change Management Working Group; and
- I am an attendee at Estates Committee;

Previously I have been a member of:

- Service Excellence Programme: HR project board
- People & Money Implementation Group – CSG

Across these groups, I uphold governance, contribute to the development of new ideas with the aim of achieving practical change, and always look to learn and develop my own knowledge.

Prior to the University, I worked for the Forestry Commission in various roles including Head of Corporate Services for Forest Enterprise Scotland (an executive role). I have also worked in private sector and been self-employed. I have a BA (Hons) in Business Studies and an MSc in Management of Training & Development.

I live in Edinburgh and enjoy spending time with friends & family, walking my dog, Woody, and planning holidays.

Thank you for your consideration in this election.

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Marie Storrar

I would like to be considered for the post of Professional Services Staff Member on the University Court.

I joined the University of Edinburgh in 2018 following a 25 year career in the private sector as digital business founder and owner. During that time I was fortunate enough to work at board level with some of the largest international organisations across a range of verticals including automotive, public sector, FMCG, pharmaceutical, alcohol, banking and finance, government, food industry, fashion and agriculture.

So, instead of selling things to people that they don't need and can't afford, I've taken the leap instead to 'selling' education. Could there be a better vocation?

I have a single-minded objective - I want to use the knowledge and experience I've gained to support initiatives, projects, communications and marketing to ensure that anyone engaging with the University of Edinburgh is left with a clear message: THIS is extraordinary. THIS is the place I want to be.

In the short time I've been here, I've been involved in / driven activities that have had a University-wide impact including:

- With colleagues, worked to develop and grow skills / knowledge share as part of University-wide (informal yet impactful) Design Community. Via the community I've delivered a range of skills-development presentations including:
 - Use of stock photography and media usage / copyright
 - Using personas to perfect messaging
 - Making the most of Social Media
 - Canva tips and tricks
- Mentoring colleagues with design responsibilities to support and develop skills
- Delivery (in collaboration with colleagues on Design Community) of full set of branded templates in Canva for use across all Colleges and Schools to support the implementation of the new 'Extraordinary' student recruitment campaign.
- 360° gallery tour of the EFI building whilst under construction
 - Proposed idea to project manager to support:
 - Managing continual stream of requests for tours
 - Engagement with potential investors
 - Delivered full suite of 360° visuals using personal kit – in liaison with Balfour Beatty (included supply of lemon drizzle cake)

I am comfortable in board / directorial positions and have held the following posts:

- Director, Founding Partner, Dowcarter (at one point Scotland's largest digital development business employing 80 people across 3 offices in Edinburgh and London)
- Director, Managing Partner, Spring Corporation (digital design and technology business working with hundreds of UK and International businesses)
- Director, ZendeH (Scots/Iranian Theatre Company)
- Director, Creative Edinburgh

I also hold a range of advisory roles with small, local businesses to support in any way I can with knowledge-share and guidance.

For these reasons, I believe I would make a good Professional Services Staff Member.

Professional Services Staff Member Election 2024

Maria Val Fernandez

I am standing for election to serve as a Professional Services Staff Member on the University Court.

I have extensive experience in representative duties in Ethics committees and taking on responsibilities in collaborative work with regulatory body of the profession in my country of origin, Spain.

As a Professional Services Staff Member, I hope to be able to act independently and inclusively towards ensuring that the University Court's oversight makes sure to keep the University's mission, values and strategic objectives close to its heart at all times. Like all staff, I know that changes in geopolitical and financial context might play a role in how the University is required to think about priorities and direction, and the Court's role may be decisive in its duty of ensuring that it delivers adequate framework for the work of the executive management of the University.

I am keen to ensure that the University successfully deals with the challenges and conflicting priorities it may face while counter-balancing and enriching managerial efforts with the need to champion diversity, transparency, trust and responsibility to one another in the University community when implementing our strategy 2030 of excellence.

As a Solicitor by background, my particular expertise and experience might be helpful to join key committees and groups where I can actively work to ensure that the University is a great place to work for all. I have an international mindset and the People area of our strategy particularly resonates with me; I am keen to join this conversation and to be a voice for diverse perspectives and a range of concerns, while committing to ensure that our common values are effectively embedded.

I would be a privilege for me to count on my colleagues' support to volunteer my time and experience by becoming a Professional Services Staff Member on the University Court, and by contributing my expertise in key committees and groups as helpful.

Thank you.

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Helen Wood

I have worked within the Estates Department for over six years. I was the Estates Development Manager for the Easter Bush and Western General campuses, before being appointed as Head of University Space, a position I have held for the last 3 years.

As an individual I am enthusiastic, positive and deeply committed to ensuring our physical estate fosters and supports our people, with a focus on community, a sense of belonging and well being for all of our stakeholders. I equally believe that evidence, data and research should be the basis of impactful decision making, which in turn informs a sustainable strategic vision. Above all, both from the opportunities offered by the best possible physical estate and from digital capabilities, we must provide from our budget the best possible experience for our students. Satisfied students are the best possible ambassadors for future applicants.

The University is completely ingrained in the fabric of our city, with an international reputation and appeal, I believe we should create a campus that is sustainable, effective, future facing, open and welcoming to our neighbours, encouraging learning, providing the best student experience and staff and student opportunities. With my experience as a qualified architect, designing large hospitals both domestically and internationally, I am well versed in the imperative for community engagement in large institutional developments and the benefits that flow to the institution from that, I believe this is a parallel to the University's position in Edinburgh.

I believe my values and behaviours, which focus on nurturing collaboration and co-creation, will be of benefit to the University Court. Through-out my career in both the private sector and in the higher education sector I have cultivated a deep appreciation for diverse perspectives and inclusive decision-making processes. In a University context, those initiatives where academic and professional services staff have worked together and collaborated have had the most value. Effective strategic planning requires a foundation of trust, knowledge and a variety of expertise. I have developed my ability to see the 'big picture' and analyse complex situations, identify opportunities and develop innovative solutions. I'm not afraid of making mistakes or asking the 'silly' question and focus on personal learning. I thrive on dynamic situations and have good experience working with multidisciplinary teams, which has equipped me with strong communication and interpersonal skills.

I am inspired by the opportunity to learn from colleagues, and collaborate with a diverse group who share a passion and focus for excellence and a commitment to make a positive impact. I am committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, diligence and innovation with the possibility of further contributing to the Institutions success and make meaningful impact.