

## Rex Tomlinson election statement

I am delighted that I have been invited to stand for election to become Chair of Court. I am conscious that the Court functions, for many of you, are 'out of sight' from your daily lives at ENU, so wished to share a little about who I am and why, I believe, you should consider me for the role at this challenging time for universities in Scotland.

As the son of a Scot, who had lived my life outside Scotland, I wished to reconnect with Scotland and Edinburgh, a place that I had many happy memories visiting both growing up and as an adult and was delighted when I was appointed as a Lay Court member late in 2020. Both my parents were educationalists and while I chose a corporate career, I think to their dismay at the time, the development and growth of people has always been at the center of my family life. Education is the most powerful weapon and the most beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.

After my own graduation I had a very diverse career with multi sector experience at a listed board level in executive, chair, director and advisory capacities throughout both the United Kingdom and Africa. My particular area of expertise, as an executive, was in leading significant strategic and operational transformation required for organisational sustainability. I have sought to use this experience over the last 15 years in my advisory and non-executive director work, such as a Lay Court member, Vice Chair and Interim Chair of the ENU Court.

I have, post my corporate career, invested in and continue to support in either a chair or an advisory capacity a number of small start-ups that are now established little businesses. These businesses include a sports agency, leadership business, accounting firm and a sport related AI data analytics business. They are all very different, are run by the founders, many decades younger than me, who have become friends, and it is a joy to be able to share their business and life journeys and to learn from each other.

I have personally witnessed the positive impact that an education can have on not only people's lives but their families and in some cases communities. I have seen how parents have sacrificed to ensure that their children can have an education and have a start in life that they did not have.

This remains the case for many today and I am committed to supporting the universities commitment to providing opportunities for learners from traditionally underrepresented groups and the growth of our international footprint. ENU's research focused on solving real-world problems and degrees building practical skills and knowledge to be 'work ready' for its graduates strongly resonates with me.

So why should you consider me to be Chair of Court?

My extensive experience in leading organisations through significant uncertainty and change, positions me uniquely to provide the strategic oversight and resilient leadership necessary for the role of Chair as we look to manage these challenging and turbulent times for the university sector in Scotland.

This experience should give confidence that I can support the Principal and the leadership team while ensuring that the Court can fulfil its responsibilities of ensuring good governance and challenge, when required, to approve the strategic direction.

While the commercial sustainability of ENU is a building block for future success it not a guarantee for future success. One of the Court's roles is to set the tone for the University to flourish. People are at the heart of the University's future success and as the governing body I believe that the experience of both student and staff needs to remain a key area of attention. We have over the last 4 years built a robust financial platform that allows us the space to shape our future destiny, it must align to our purpose and ensure we continue to remain the 'home of difference makers'. This is an area that will be high on my agenda if appointed Chair.

I have built productive working relationships with the stakeholders I have engaged with since joining the Court. The Court membership, while comprising a majority of Lay Court members, is also made up with student, staff and union representatives and I commit to ensure that they continue to have their voice heard. I strongly believe that it is this diversity that makes the Court a unique, stronger and more effective body for ENU.

The Chair also needs to have a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the Principal, acknowledging her role is to run the university, with her team, yet understanding that as Chair, on behalf of Court, the required oversight and governance needs to be adhered to. I believe my relationship with the Principal is key to a successful relationship and better outcomes for the University.

I am particularly attracted by the purpose of the University, to add social, cultural and economic capital to the communities it serves and believe we need to hold these dear as we shape and navigate our future as ENU. My career has been underpinned by a deep-seated belief that all organisations should always be used as force for good in society. This only works where an organisation is underpinned by a strong set of values that 'shape the way we do things.' For us as a university, providing 'future career degrees' so that students and our alumni can go out and make a difference is key!

I am an empathetic leader and my leadership is underpinned by my values which are cast in a very firm ethical foundation. I believe one of my leadership strengths has been my ability to build and maintain meaningful professional relationships. My informal style has helped contribute to this and I have regularly received feedback both formal and informal that collaboration and teamwork are areas of strength. Key to success for the transformation leadership roles I have fulfilled has been the ability to deal with groups who often had conflicting interests, yet whose commitment and support was key to the success of the transformation. This was only possible through working collaboratively and respecting diverse positions and contributions.

I have a keen interest in people and mentor a number of people and have done so for many years. I find this so fulfilling as I have discovered that I learn and grow as much from the person I am mentoring as hopefully they do from me.

I live in Edinburgh and I am married to Simone, my best friend, and we have no children. I love sport, more as a spectator now, and both Simone and I have a passion for wildlife and conservation.

I strongly believe that I am the right person for the role of Chair at this challenging time in the University's history and have the right experience and skills to guide the University on its journey. I would be honoured if you would give me the opportunity to make a contribution by voting for me in the forthcoming election.