

Academic Staff Member Election 2026

Jennifer Lavoie

Representing the Voices of Academic Staff

As Academic Staff Member on the University Court, I will help to liaise between the University of Edinburgh Academic Staff body and the Court to bring a representation of the diversity of academic voices and experiences. I hope that this will help to ensure that strategic decisions rendered by the Court will translate well to the lived academic reality.

As part of the primary duties, the University Court will approve the mission and strategic vision of the University and its major priorities. One of those established priorities are “people”, according to The University of Edinburgh’s Strategy 2030. As the University of Edinburgh’s mission and reputation is based largely on the success of its people, protecting that mission requires a thorough understanding of the conditions under which outstanding staff thrive or leave. I have direct experience and insight into this through having held a Depute Head of Institute role for Education, Community & Society within Moray House School of Education & Sport (CAHSS).

Mission & Strategic Vision of the University & Scottish HE Environment

One of the contributions that I will bring to the University Court is the scrutiny and analysis of strategic decisions through the lens of how they will impact the lived reality for academic staff. Through my role as a Chancellor’s Fellow, lead researcher on internal and external research contracts, and Depute Head of Institute, I have acquired experience of working with academic staff on staffing strategy, research conditions, and institutional welfare. I have also worked with wider stakeholders in the community, including in Scottish government. This has provided me with grounded, lived insight and experience contributing to strategic direction. I will seek out the diversity of perspectives from the University academic community to hear their concerns and seek their solutions. Through these channels, I will collect information to bring to the University Court dialogue to help to ensure that high-level strategic decisions are genuinely workable at the operational level and not just in principle.

Decision-Making on Core Matters & The University’s Reputation & Values

As Academic Staff Member on the University Court, I will use my experience supporting academic staff to bring insight to assist the Court with well-informed strategic decisions that will resonate with academic staff. One of the substantial challenges currently facing HE (beyond funding challenges) is that of precarious and poorly structured contracts, both teaching contracts and research contracts, which can be damaging for academics and can also pose a serious reputational risk. Further challenges include unclear research time allocations and poor contractual conditions, which are barriers to research excellence. I will bring a ground-level understanding of what is required to deliver a real investment in people, beyond strategic language.

Code of Conduct Obligations

I am familiar with the Code of Conduct for University Court Members. I am not disqualified from acting as a Trustee under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.