The 3 core demands of the Student-Staff Assembly, voted through unanimously at the 3rd Student-Staff Assembly, are:

- **Stop the Cuts** (Passed UNANIMOUSLY)
- **Disclose Divest Democratise** (Passed UNANIMOUSLY, 1 abstention)
- **Principal and Provost: Resign Resign Resign** (Passed UNANIMOUSLY)

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Automated template to email these demands to senior management, your MSPs, and Court members HERE.

DEMAND 1: Stop the Cuts

The University Principal Peter Mathieson and the Provost Kim Graham's plan is to cut the staff budget by £90 million, which represents around 1800 jobs, but the full scale of their cuts still haven't yet been shared. On the 23rd of September, they cut 90+ programmes, while many more courses are being closed or under threat of closure. Nearly 1000 jobs have already been lost, affecting mainly the most precarious workers. Redundancies are currently being forced in the SWAY team, whose mission is to support international students. SWAY is due to lose two thirds of its staff. The planned mass cuts will decimate the livelihood of staff, the working conditions of those who will remain in position, and the course offerings and learning experiences of students. With so many jobs at risk, the UCU has had to declare a five-week strike; senior Management has refused to meet any of the UCU demands and has refused to engage in any meaningful negotiation.

The cuts so far have targeted specialisms foundational to Scottish and Gaelic heritage; craft programmes central to the Scottish arts scene such as Jewellery & Silversmithing; performance costume, & textiles; and socially vital education programmes such as community education, inclusive education and outdoors and environmental education.

These cuts are wholly unnecessary; there is no deficit. The University is the 3rd richest in the UK; it holds more capital and wealth than ever; it now owns over 550 buildings in Edinburgh; the measures taken by management have consistently shifted expenditures towards more capital expenditure and less staff expenditure. A university should be focused on delivering teaching and research, not accumulating assets; the budget cuts are not a deficit-avoidance effort, rather they are a surplus-maximising effort, as demonstrated by Peter Mathieson and Kim Graham recently raising the university surplus target.

We demand:

- That all planned cuts to jobs, programmes, and courses are reversed and that the university stops defunding staff and students.
- Specifically, that senior management and court commits to reversing the downward shift in the ratio of staff expenditure to capital expenditure.
- That senior management negotiates with the UCU and meets its immediate demands so that the strike may be called off.

DEMAND 2: Disclose, Divest, Democratise

Decisions to cut courses and staff have a profound effect on the academic life of our University. The Senate is the University supreme governance body that leads on teaching and education related matters, in line with the Higher Education Governance Act 2016. Yet the Senior Leadership Team and the University Court have driven through changes that alter the academic life of the University against the wishes of the Senate. Senior management has now published their contested statement of Senate's primary responsibilites that attempts to further restrict the remit of the Senate in favour of the majority unelected and undemocratic University Court.

In 2024, the University Senate voted overwhelmingly to divest and mandated senior management to take action on that decision. The Students' Union likewise overwhelmingly voted in favour of divestment, and the UCU passed motions in favour. However, Senior Management and the University Court have done nothing meaningful at all since then. RIAG (the Responsible Investment Advisory Group) was created, but was turned by senior management into exactly the opposite of the open, transparent and proactive due diligence body that students and staff wanted. Staff with relevant expertise were dismissed and pushed out. RIAG became secretive and opaque. For over two years, demands for divestment and change in the University's investment practices, to protect human rights and avoid complicity in international crimes like genocide and war crimes, have been stonewalled by Senior Management.

Senior Management has failed to give a clear or transparent account of its decisions. They claim without evidence that enormous cuts are necessary to avoid future deficits and to protect the University's capacity to invest. They have never shared the modelling or assumptions behind that claim, nor have they explained why they need to raise surplus targets for the university. Without precise information about the university's finances and decision processes, staff and students are disempowered from participating in and scrutinising the university's governance.

Students and staff have had no opportunity to shape the university's decisions on both cuts and divestment, in spite of overwhelming democratic mandates. Senior Management and the University Court are pushing through far-reaching and damaging changes to the University without even trying to involve all of us who will be bearing the brunt of their mismanagement for years to come. They are deeply undemocratic, blinded by groupthink and treating the rest of the University community with utter contempt.

We demand:

- That the financial model and data serving as the justification for cuts must be shared with the staff unions and the Senate. That the university discloses its investments - direct and indirect - to Senate, the Staff unions and the Students' Unions.
- That a collective deliberation and decision-making process involving and centering the staff and student bodies take place to determine the direction and the vision for the University.
- That University governance must be reformed to make it more inclusive, transparent and democratic, specifically:
    - That Court makes its decisions transparent and collaborate, in good faith, with Senate.

    - That Senior management and Court stop taking authority for themselves, acting in secrecy and overpowering the rest of the University to serve corporate strategy rather than the academic community of staff and students that makes this University what it is.
    - That the authority of the Senate to lead on issues that affect the academic life, including academic reputation through the moral and ethical standing of the institution, is respected and upheld in practice by University Court and Senior Leadership. This means not continuing to allow the Senior leadership team free reign to bypass the Senate and govern with an iron fist and in secret through Court and its committees and working groups. The University Senate must have oversight of, power of proposal and veto power over restructure decisions affecting academic work and the university's academic mission, as stipulated in the Higher Education Governance Act 2016. The Senate must also have oversight, power of proposal and veto power over any changes pertaining to the ethical and moral standing of the institution (including ethical investment). Consultation and decision-making processes must involve the Senate, the Students' Union, and the staff unions at every point. All parties must be empowered to present alternative proposals to those proposed by senior management, and sufficient access to internal data - including financial data - is a precondition.
- That the University abide by the 1948 Genocide Convention and that RIAG (the Responsible Investment Advisory Group) be rebuilt as the inclusive and transparent human rights due diligence review body that it was originally supposed to be, not the secretive club that it was turned into. It must have majority staff and student members. It must have the expertise, oversight powers and authority to proactively review and change University investment practices to protect human rights and avoid University complicity in war crimes and genocide, including in Palestine. And it must be able to receive representations from students and staff and work transparently to ensure University investments are aligned with human rights values.

DEMAND 3: Principal and Provost: Resign Resign Resign

Peter Mathieson and Kim Graham carry the chief personal responsibility for the current financial pressures, the evisceration of Edinburgh University's learning and working environment, the slash-and-burn, the internal governance crisis, and the failure to act on the clear democratic mandate for divestment.

Over the course of their tenure, they have made many calamitous over-investments, including but not limited to the Edinburgh Futures Institutes, which went £100m over budget and is critically under-used to this day; or the digital tool People & Money, which ended up costing £37m against a £14m budget, and involved thousands of people going unpaid in 2022 when it was disastrously rolled out. The University amassed over 1bn worth of buildings, land, and investments under their leadership, and the interests, depreciation and amortisation for their overspending is a core part of the current rise in expenditure. Their insistence on raising surplus targets and college contributions to the central university budget well above what is normal for a university (and a charity!), is what is currently driving the staff and programme cuts.

They personally played a central role in the neutralisation of the divestment votes, sidelining expert staff and binning their recommendations. Not only did they refuse to divest, they recently decided to join the Defence Universities Alliance, without a shred of consultation. They're not just not listening to students and staff: they're actively going in the opposite direction.

Peter Mathieson and Kim Graham have already suffered votes of no confidence by the University Senate, as well as a vote of no confidence by the EUSA Student Council (passed with 95% in 2023), all of which they ignored. They have obfuscated their power grab by delegating responsibility to a chain of committees and sub-committees, which nonetheless they always chair or whose members they hand-pick among their closest supporters (see e.g. the 'Academic Size and Shape' programme which orchestrates the cuts). They have created a structure which gives them full executive power over the University, without any accountability to students and staff. Peter Mathieson and Kim Graham's reign is one of intimidation and suppression of dissent. As we write this, we know that staff members on closed programmes have been threatened with disciplinary processes to prevent them from talking to the press; that management attempted and often succeeded in denying them their right to union representation; that international students have been threatened with visa suspension or cancellation if they attend picket lines and teach-outs.

We demand:

- That The Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Peter Mathieson, and The Provost Professor Kim Graham resign immediately.
- That future Principal and Provost be elected by the student and staff body, following the example of e.g. the Provost election at Trinity College Dublin.