

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY COURT  
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Friday 23 April 2010 at  
9.00 am in the Castle Room, New Craig, Craighouse**

**PRESENT:**

Professor R Mackenzie (Vice-Principal, Research & Knowledge Transfer) (Acting Convenor); K Bylinska (President, Napier Students' Association); J Dean (School of Management & Law); Professor M Gray (Associate Dean from Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); J Greig (School of Health & Social Sciences); Dr P Jaworski (School of Accounting, Economics & Statistics); L Juleff (Senior Lecturer from the Business School); Professor J Kennedy (School of Computing); Professor J Kerridge (Professoriate); C Lambert (Director of Student Affairs); A Millar (Student Representative from the Business School); Professor B Paechter (Associate Dean from Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); R Pelik (Director of Academic Development); C Pinder (Director, NULIS); Professor M Prowse (Dean of Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); Dr J Rees (Vice-Principal, Academic Quality & Customer Service); Dr J Sharp (Senior Lecturer from Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); A Sibbald (Associate Director (Academic Enhancement) Academic Development); Professor B Sloan (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); I A Smith (Teaching Fellows/Senior Teaching Fellows); L Veitch (School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Dr G C Webber (University Secretary); Dr R Wilkinson (Associate Dean from the Business School); H Wollman (Head of School from Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences).

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

S Logie (Assistant Director, Corporate Affairs & Clerk to the University Court) (Clerk).

**APOLOGIES:**

Professor Dame J K Stringer (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); N Ashton (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr S Cairncross (Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Dr J Ensor (Head of School from the Business School); Professor T Fernandes (School of Life Sciences); A Gilkison (Head of School from Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Professor A McCleery (Director of Research); D MacRae (Student Representative from FECCL); Professor G Stonehouse (Dean of the Business School); R Sutherland (School of Marketing, Tourism & Languages); A Waugh (Senior Lecturer from Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); K Wilkinson (Student Representative from FHLSS); J Worden (Dean of International Strategy & Operations);

**1. WELCOME**

- 1.1 The Acting Convenor welcomed Linda Veitch to her first meeting of Academic Board as the new member from the School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care.
- 1.2 The apologies were noted with the Acting Convenor highlighting that many of those absent were unavoidably delayed overseas due to the recent travel difficulties caused by volcanic ash.

**PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2010 AB(09/10)40**

- 2.1 The minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 No matters arising were identified

**4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

**AB(09/10)41**

4.1 The Acting Convenor introduced the Principal's written report, highlighting the implications of recent announcements from the Scottish Funding Council and the uncertainty that remains regarding budget settlements for 2010/11 onwards. Progress was reported regarding the annual planning and budgeting round, including the focus of the annual Court/PEG Residential Conference. The success of the recent formal presentation at Buckingham Palace of the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize was reflected upon.

4.2 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the written report.

**5. LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY: UPDATE**

**AB(09/10)42**

5.1 The Director of Academic Development introduced the paper which provided an update on the developing Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Strategy. The approach to be adopted in creating a dynamic strategy was highlighted, along with the aims and purpose of the strategy and a number of key themes and issues which were emerging.

5.2 In the discussion that followed members noted that although there are still points of detail that require to be finalised, overall the approach of the draft Strategy was very positive and a move in the right direction.

5.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report and **endorsed** the onward development of the Strategy.

**6. STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGY: UPDATE**

**AB(09/10)43**

6.1 The Vice Principal (Academic Quality & Customer Service) introduced the update on work underway and progress to date in the development of the University's Student Experience (SE) Strategy, which it was anticipated would come to the Academic Board for approval at its June meeting.

6.2 Discussion followed in which it was noted that the SE Strategy was closely inter-related to the developing LTA Strategy. It was also noted that there is a close link between the SE Strategy and the work being undertaken to update the Student Charter. Given these close linkages it was questioned whether a separate SE Strategy is required. Members considered how such a Strategy would be used to inform activities. It was noted that the SE Strategy should incorporate a short, over-arching and visionary statement that is valuable in guiding actions to enhance the experience of students.

6.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update and the VP(AQCS) undertook to reflect upon the discussion whilst continuing the development of the SE Strategy.

**7. CO-CURRICULAR PROVISION: ANNUAL REPORT AB(09/10)44**

- 7.1 The Director of Academic Development introduced the first annual report on co-curricular provision from the Co-Curricular Modules Sub-Committee. The report set out reflections on the first year of co-curricular modules, highlighted the issues which had arisen and recommended measures for the ongoing monitoring and promotion of co-curricular modules, including a proposal to run a Faculty Co-Curricular Champions pilot scheme.
- 7.2 Discussion followed during which strong commitment was expressed for the continuation of co-curricular modules. It was however noted that there are considerable barriers to their success including: awareness of the modules by students; the 'selling' of their benefits by programme leaders; competing demands on staff seeking to develop and deliver such modules; and the lack of incentives or resources for individuals, Schools and Professional Services to support their development and delivery. It was suggested that if co-curricular modules are to be a success these points would need to be addressed by the University, noting that Academic Board has no locus in resourcing matters. It was further suggested the pool of co-curricular modules may benefit from being expanded considerably, with 'exciting' modules updated on a regular basis that are appealing to students and enhance graduate attributes and employability.
- 7.3 Thereafter, Academic Board: **a) noted** the report and actions taken by the Co-Curricular Modules Committee for the ongoing monitoring and promotion of co-curricular modules and, **b) confirmed** its commitment to the co-curricular concept.
- 7.4 The Academic Board questioned whether the appointment of Co-curricular Champions would be of benefit and therefore the proposed pilot was **not endorsed**. It was instead **agreed** that the matter be remitted for the consideration of the new Vice-Principal (Academic) and brought back to Academic Board, as appropriate, in the future.

**8. STUDENT RETENTION STEERING GROUP: ANNUAL REPORT AB(09/10)45**

- 8.1 The Vice Principal (Academic Quality & Customer Service) introduced the annual report of the Student Retention Steering Group, highlighting the student retention activities which had taken place across the University for the period March 2009 to February 2010. It was noted that the Widening Access Retention Premium (WARP), which funds many of the University's retention activities, was currently being reviewed by the SFC with a decision expected in December 2010, the outcome of which may impact upon this area of work.
- 8.2 It was reported that HESA statistics have recently been published which indicate mixed results for the University: non-continuation rates in year of entry are improving however the percentage of students projected to complete their intended degree has declined slightly. The VP(AQCS) noted that a link to the full HESA report would be made available to Academic Board members.

8.3 Discussion followed during which it was queried if more could be done to learn lessons from those areas of the University in which progress in enhancing retention was being made. It was noted that this is the intention.

8.4 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

**9. WEEK 1 ARRANGEMENTS: PROPOSED AMENDMENT AB(09/10)46**

9.1 The Vice Principal (Academic Quality & Customer Service) introduced the item, which reported on a consultation which had taken place into concerns regarding the operation of Week 1 (Continuing) and consequently sought Academic Board's approval for a modification to the parameters for Week 1 which it had previously approved in April 2007. This modification would be to permit formal teaching to take place in Week 1 for continuing students and direct entrants.

9.2 Discussion followed during which concern was raised regarding the proposed modification to Week 1 (Continuing) arrangements. It was suggested that the practical problems of implementing the proposal could be insurmountable for reasons including: competing demands on staff time; the closeness to the publication of the timetable for 2010/11 week 1; the need for all Schools to follow a similar approach in the modular system; and the ongoing challenges of timetabling week 1 activities. The desire to retain the ethos of the Week 1 experience was also highlighted.

9.3 Concern was expressed that the current arrangements have not operated for sufficient time for their effectiveness to be assessed fully and that implementing changes for Week 1 (Continuing) could inadvertently impact adversely on the successful development of Week 1 (New). It was suggested that greater consideration may be required regarding the different challenges encountered regarding Week1 in Trimester1 and Trimester2.

9.4 Following considerable discussion it was **agreed** that no changes would be introduced regarding the arrangements for Week 1, Trimester 1 for the new academic year (2010/11). Given the importance of the issue, it was also **agreed** that the matter should be given further consideration and be brought back as a revised paper to the next meeting of Academic Board in June.

**10. RESEARCH INSTITUTES: APPROVAL OF TITLES AB(09/10)47**

10.1 The Vice Principal (Research & Knowledge Transfer) (Acting Convenor) introduced the item. At its meeting on 3 July 2009 Academic Board approved the establishment of Research Institutes as outlined in paper AB/09/32. It was highlighted that since approval changes had been made to the titles of three of these Institutes. Academic Board was invited to approve the Institute Titles.

10.2 Discussion followed during which it was queried whether a more common naming convention should be adopted in naming the new Institutes. Concern was raised that with nine Institutes and over 30 Research Centres, there may be unintended organisational costs associated with the new Research, KT and Commercialisation structure. It was further noted that greater clarity may be required regarding the functions and operations of the new Institutes.

10.3 The VP(R&KT) responded to these points noting that the Institutes are at an early stage of development with Directors only recently being appointed. A number of issues are therefore still being considered before being finalised and these will be brought to Academic Board as appropriate. It was further reported that whilst the VP(Academic) will have responsibility for deciding upon the establishment and abolition of Research Centres, a schedule of Research Centres will be brought to Academic Board annually for homologation of these decisions.

10.4 Thereafter, Academic Board **approved** the three revised Research Institute titles and **noted** the full title for the Edinburgh Institute, as follows:

- Institute for Creative Industries
- Institute for Informatics & Digital Innovation
- Forest Products Research Institute
- Edinburgh Institute for Leadership and Management Practice

## **11. ADMISSIONS POLICY SCHEDULES: FOR APPROVAL AB(09/10)48**

11.1 The Director of Student Affairs introduced the three schedules which had been identified as needing to be developed to support the Admissions Policy, which was approved by Academic Board at its meeting on 3 July 2009. It was noted that the schedules had been developed in line with external best practice and in consultation with appropriate areas within the University, and had been fully considered by the Quality Committee, which recommended them to the Board for final approval.

11.2 Discussion followed during which the Criminal Convictions Disclosure Policy arrangements for International Students in the UK for between 3-6 months was queried. The Director of Student Affairs undertook to investigate this issue and respond appropriately.

11.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **approved** the:

- Criminal Convictions Disclosure Policy
- Code of Practice for Applicants with Declared Disabilities
- Procedures on Feedback, Appeals and Complaints (Admissions)

## **PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES**

This section reflects the outcome of the Review of Effectiveness of Academic Board whereby the minutes of Academic Board's sub-committees are received to confirm to the Board that its sub-committees are continuing to meet their remits and are undertaking business on its behalf to the standard it expects.

**12. Minutes of Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee meeting held on 21 January 2010 AB(09/10)34**

**13. Minutes of Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee meeting held on 18 March 2010 AB(09/10)49**

To be received at the next meeting of Academic Board.

14. **Open Minutes of Higher Degrees Committee meeting held on 19 January 2010** AB(09/10)35
15. **Open Minutes of Research Degrees Committee meeting held on 23 March 2010** AB(09/10)50
16. **Minutes of Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee meeting held on 27 January 2010** AB(09/10)37
17. **Minutes of Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee meeting held on 4 March 2010** AB(09/10)51
18. **Minutes of Quality Committee meeting held on 29 January 2010** AB(09/10)38
19. **Minutes of Quality Committee meeting held on 19 March 2010** AB(09/10)52
20. **Minutes of Co-Curricular Modules Committee meeting held on 25 February 2010** AB(09/10)53

**PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**21. UNIVERSITY KEY RISKS APPROPRIATE TO ACADEMIC BOARD\*** AB(09/10)54

21.1 Academic Board **noted** the report on the University's Key Risks appropriate to its remit.

**22. PROVISIONAL MEETING DATES FOR NEXT SESSION**

22.1 Academic Board **noted** its provisional meeting dates for the 2010/11 session as follows:

24 September 2010  
19 November 2010  
4 March 2011  
27 May 2011

**23. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2009/10:**

Academic Board **noted** its remaining meeting for 2009/10 as follows:

11 June 2010  
To commence at 9.00 am and to be held in the Castle Room, New Craig, Craighouse Campus