

**APPROVED
CIRCULATED**

**AB(11/12)30
JMCD Mins**

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 18 November 2011 at 9.00 am in
Room 3.D.03, Sighthill Campus**

PRESENT:

Professor Dame J K Stringer DBE (Principal & Vice-Chancellor)(Convenor); N Ashton (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr S Cairncross (Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Professor J Duffield (Vice-Principal, Strategy, Resources & External Affairs); Professor C Fairfield (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); S Falconer (Head of School from the Business School); Professor E Hart (Professoriate); A Hobbs (Student Representative from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); R Kemmer (School of Computing); C Lambert (Director, Student and Academic Services); I McIntosh (Assistant Dean from Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); Professor R Mackenzie (Vice-Principal, Commercialisation); Dr S Marr (School of Marketing, Tourism & Languages); A Millar (Student Representative from the Business School); A Morrison (Assistant Dean from the Business School); Professor B Paechter (Assistant Dean from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); R Pelik (Leader of Academic Strategy & Practice); C Pinder (Director, Information Services); S Smith (Head of School from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Professor G Stonehouse (Dean, the Business School); L Veitch (School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Dr G Webber (University Secretary); J Worden (Dean of International Strategy & Operations); T Zanelli (President, Napier Students' Association); J Zhang (Student Representative from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries).

IN ATTENDANCE:

J McDermott (Governance Officer) (Clerk)

APOLOGIES:

K Cairney (Director of International, Development & External Affairs); M Chapman (School of Life, Sport & Social Sciences); Dr J Donaldson (Head of School from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); R Holmes (School of Accounting, Financial Services and Law); Dr P Jaworski (School of Management); Dr L Juleff (Teaching Fellows/Senior Teaching Fellows); Professor A McCleery (Leader of Research Strategy & Practice); Professor M Prowse (Dean, Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); Professor S Smith (Director from the Research Institutes).

1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

1.1 The Convenor welcomed members to the meeting, making particular mention of the new student members, Ms Hobbs and Mr Zhang, who had recently been elected to represent the students of the Faculties of Health, Life & Social Sciences and Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries respectively.

1.2 The apologies were **noted**

PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2011 (AB(11/12)13)

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

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 No matters arising from the minutes were reported to the meeting.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (AB(11/12)14)

- 4.1 The Principal highlighted key elements of her written report, noting in particular the continued consideration in the sector of the Government's pre-legislative consultation document on Post-16 Education and the recently published (14 November) parallel consultation by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council on regionalisation. There was anticipated to be particular implications for the Colleges. Since, however, these changes would also be relevant to the HE sector, the University would need to take care in managing its response to the likely new environment. A further external factor was the UCAS consultation on Admissions Process Review, which had received a mixed response.
- 4.2 The appointment of the new Vice Principal (Academic) was noted, with Professor Alistair Sambell due to take on the role in early 2012. Professor Sambell currently holds the post of Pro Vice Chancellor at Sheffield Hallam University.
- 4.3 The Principal referred to recent discussions at the Principal's Executive Group, where the latest student enrolment figures had been considered, as had the guidance for planning and budgeting for session 2012/13.
- 4.4 Significant activity had taken place with regard to growing the University's international business, as part of the University's overall growth strategy. It was reported that consideration was being given to tendering for a campus presence in Hong Kong. In addition, the Principal's recent work in India, as part of a delegation led by Cabinet Secretary Mike Russell MSP, had identified a number of partnership opportunities in that country. There were plans to further extend in that region, with a Memorandum of Understanding being signed with Sikkim Manipal University. This offered potentially significant opportunities, including in distance learning and, by association, possible collaboration in Dubai.
- 4.5 It was further noted that the Indian Council for Cultural Relations had agreed to support developments in Tagore Studies in the University's Centre for Literature and Writing. Funding had been made available for a Chair and other posts to facilitate research. Congratulations were offered to Dr Bashabi Fraser and Professor Linda Dryden for leading this initiative. Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop MSP was scheduled to come to the University to recognise the development.
- 4.6 Academic Board **noted** the report.

5. ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO REVIEW – INTERIM REPORT (AB(11/12)15)

- 5.1 The Board received the report which advised of the decision to undertake an Academic Portfolio Review in the current Session. This would be informed by the comprehensive review undertaken in 2005/06 and the on-going work since then. The Review would also be informed by the Funding Council's (SFC) approach to regional coherence and was intended to inform part of the University's approach to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) enhancement theme, *Developing and Supporting the Curriculum*, a draft of which was appended to the paper.
- 5.2 It was reported that the Review would focus on the future size and shape of provision and the changing nature of demand. The growing diversity of the student body would also be a consideration. There was a need to ensure that the portfolio was genuinely valid and as such the viability and efficiency of provision would inform the decisions of whether to continue, refresh or close programmes. It was further noted that the Review would address the suitable mechanisms for supporting the delivery of programmes as well as processes to help increase flexibility of study. These would include working practices.
- 5.3 The Board was informed that the process would be school-focussed and would be forward looking, seeking to address new markets, provision and approaches. There would be input from professional bodies where appropriate, and the expertise of academic staff would be drawn on. Reports would be considered at faculty level and then centrally, in the Office of the Vice Principal. It was noted that the Review would include external benchmarking of performance.
- 5.4 In discussion, it was explained that whilst there was an intention to link the Review with the Planning Process for 2012/13, this would not limit the capacity to take a medium-to-long-term view. The parameters to be considered would underpin planning over the next few years. The initial stages of the Review were underway and were reported to be positive, with staff recognising the potential benefits.
- 5.5 Academic Board **noted** the report.

6. MID-YEAR ELIR MONITORING REPORT (AB(11/12)16)

- 6.1 Academic Board received the paper that informed it of progress regarding the follow-up to ELIR 2011. Members were reminded that the ELIR Report had expressed confidence in the University's management of quality and standards. Nevertheless, some areas of activity had been identified for improvement with work now underway under the oversight of the Deans, each of whom have responsibility for relevant areas of ELIR until the new Vice Principal (Academic) comes into post.
- 6.2 The progress being made in each of the headline areas of action was given brief consideration. It was noted that members of the relevant committees, including the Student Experience Committee, were involved in the improvement processes. Significant good practice had been identified and the positive

contribution made by academic and support staff alike was highlighted. The interrelation of this work with feedback received in student surveys was clear, and accordingly, suitable emphasis was being given in faculties and the professional services. The on-going work in each of the faculties was described, including: a pilot project to identify and make contact with students who had missed three events in a given period; a school-based 'tracker' scheme; and using new technologies and social media to engage with students. It was noted that these initiatives, and others, were being reported to and promulgated *via* the Student Retention Group.

- 6.3 In a related matter, it was noted that a draft annual report to SFC/QAA would be submitted to the Board in June and then to Court. Further revision would likely need to be made before submission in September. The Board (and Court) would subsequently be asked to endorse the final submission.
- 6.4 Academic Board **noted** the report and the on-going activities.

7. REPORT ON STUDENT SURVEYS (ANNUAL COMPENDIUM) (AB(11/12)17)

- 7.1 The Board received and considered the paper, which summarised the findings for the University of a range of surveys and other research. The paper contained a substantial amount of detail and members were encouraged to scrutinise it outwith the meeting. The key overarching points were discussed as segmented by undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate students. It was emphasised that whilst there were several aspects for the University to improve upon, there were also many positive areas, from which encouragement could be taken. It was noted that most of the surveys were conducted on an annual basis, which permitted the effect of actions to be monitored.
- 7.2 It was emphasised that systems were being bolstered so that student feedback could be listened to and acted upon. Good practice was being shared to greater extent and the appropriate professional services involved. Initiatives included bringing staff and students together in focus groups to explore specific issues. Action plans were being prepared in several schools and the Deans had taken action in certain situations where immediate solutions were apparent.
- 7.3 The President of NSA welcomed the very positive reports from each of the faculties and reported that NSA was fully involved. He informed the Board of a further initiative soon to be launched by NSA where students would be encouraged to report 'one thing' good about the University and another that could be improved. The "I ♥ my...." initiative was also continuing and was recognised as an excellent means of recognising good practice across the University.
- 7.4 In discussion, it was noted that where surveys showed differing outcomes, further work should be undertaken to understand the detail. It was further suggested that different groups of students might come to the University holding varying levels of expectation. It was noted that the lack of social space for

students continued to affect negatively the student experience as a common expectation of students pre-arrival was that there would be space to congregate and socialise on or near campus. It was reported that work was being undertaken to seek to address this, at least in part. A further positive aspect mentioned was the support provided for students through the *Confident Futures* initiative.

- 7.5 The Convenor welcomed the very encouraging discussion, which had highlighted many of the positive initiatives and actions being generated across the University. The Board **noted** the report and **agreed** to continue to monitor progress on a regular basis.

8. ACADEMIC CALENDARS FOR 2012/13 THROUGH TO 2015/16
(AB(11/12)18)

- 8.1 It was noted that the Calendar took into account the revision to the Postgraduate Academic Year that had been agreed at the previous meeting. It was further noted that the implementation team continued to work on the various practical issues raised previously and that there remained the intention that suitable resources would be provided. The Board **approved** the Academic Calendar for the period stated.

9. NOMINATIONS TO EXTEND A VISITING RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP
(AB(11/12)19)

- 9.1 The Board **approved** an extension to a Visiting Research Fellowship within the Business School for a period of five years.

PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES

Academic Board received the minutes of the following meetings to confirm that its sub-committees were continuing to meet their remits and were undertaking business on its behalf to the standard it expects. No comments were raised on any of the minutes on this occasion.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 10. Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee; 12 May 2011 | AB(10/11)58 |
| 11. Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee; 8 September 2011 | AB(11/12)20 |
| 12. Research Degrees Assessment Board; 20 September 2011 (Open Minutes only) | AB(11/12)21 |
| 13. Academic Strategy & Enhancement Committee; 21 September 2011 | AB(11/12)22 |
| 14. Collaborative Provision Committee; 23 September 2011 | AB(11/12)23 |
| 15. FECCI Faculty Academic Board; 11 October 2011 | AB(11/12)24 |
| 16. FHLSS Faculty Academic Board; 12 October 2011 | AB(11/12)25 |
| 17. Business School Faculty Academic Board; 20 October 2011 | AB(11/12)26 |

PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

18. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2011/12:

02 March 2012; at 9.00am, in the Castle Room, Craighouse Campus
01 June 2012 at 9.00am, venue to be confirmed.