

**APPROVED
CIRCULATED**

**AB(11/12)49
JMcD Mins**

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 2 March 2012 at 9.00 am in
The Castle Room, Craighouse Campus**

PRESENT:

Professor Dame J K Stringer DBE (Principal & Vice-Chancellor)(Convenor); Dr S Cairncross (Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); K Cairney (Director of International, Development & External Affairs); M Chapman (School of Life, Sport & Social Sciences); 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); R Kemmer (School of Computing); C Lambert (Director, Student and Academic Services); Professor A McCleery (Leader of Research Strategy & Practice); I McIntosh (Acting Dean, 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); Dr K Smyth (Teaching Fellows/Senior Teaching Fellows); L Veitch (School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Dr G Webber (University Secretary); 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:

N Ashton (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr J Donaldson (Head of School from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); A Hobbs (Student Representative from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); R Holmes (School of Accounting, Financial Services and Law); Dr P Jaworski (School of Management); Professor S Smith (Director from the Research Institutes); Professor G Stonehouse (Dean, the Business School); J Worden (Dean of International Strategy & Operations).

1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed members to the meeting, making particular mention of Dr Smyth, the recently elected member from the Teaching Fellow community. The election had been necessary as the previous member, Dr Juleff, had left the University. The Board expressed its appreciation of the contribution made by Dr Juleff and wished her every success in her new post.
- 1.2 The Convenor further noted that Mr McIntosh was present as the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences, following the retirement of

Professor Prowse. The Board expressed its appreciation of the contribution made by Professor Prowse since joining the University as Dean in September 2006 and wished her well in retirement.

1.3 The apologies were **noted**

PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2011 (AB(11/12)30)

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)31)

4.1 The Principal highlighted key elements of her written report, noting in particular the continued debate in the sector of the Scottish Government's plans Post-16 Education and the statements of the Cabinet Secretary on regionalisation for the College Sector. This had particular relevance to the University's link with Carnegie College.

4.2 A further external factor was the recent report on University Governance. It was as yet unclear as to how the Cabinet Secretary would respond to the report and thus how it may affect Edinburgh Napier. Any legislation was likely to be at least 12 months away. It was suggested that most of the 44 recommendations should not be contentious for this University. It was hoped that there would be a suitable consultation process to give the opportunity fully to explore those issues that may cause difficulty. It was noted that University Court had given some preliminary attention to the issue and would have further discussion at its next meeting. Academic Board would give the matter the required attention once a formal consultation document was available.

4.3 In the meantime it was reported that a main principle in the report had been to maintain academic freedom. The Board was reminded that this principle had been underlined in the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy that the Board had approved some time ago. The Board reaffirmed its consensus on the topic. The Board also welcomed the reassurance that due diligence was carried out to ensure that appropriate standards applied in dealings with international partners.

4.4 Further recommendations of the report that had attracted attention included: the possible introduction of elected Chairs of Court (who would also be eligible for remuneration); and changes to composition of governing bodies so that places would be set aside specifically for trade union representatives whilst the number of places for Vice Principals would be reduced.

- 4.5 It was suggested that the Faculty Academic Boards and other sub-committees of the Board could usefully consider the recommendations of the Report in order to inform a further discussion at the next meeting.
- 4.6 With regard to the University's international business, it was noted that significant work was underway to increase links with partner institutions as part of the University's overall growth strategy. It was reported that some 1400 new graduates had recently graduated from Edinburgh Napier programmes hosted by partner institutions in Hong Kong. The University's reputation had been forged in that region over 20 years and was second to none. Potential opportunities were therefore being explored to extend the operation in Hong Kong. Taking into account the significant constraints of staff travelling back and forth, consideration was being given to tendering for a campus presence in Hong Kong. It was reported that nothing was as yet certain and that any movement would be put to the Board for full discussion.
- 4.7 It was further noted that the current policies of the UK Borders Agency, to limit the numbers of immigrants to the UK, posed a risk to the University's strategic goal of internationalising the University as such policies would be likely to have an impact on the number of students directly recruited to study in Edinburgh. The University's strategy of increasing its transnational provision overseas had therefore proved to be the right one.
- 4.8 There was comment on the SFC Grant settlement, which had been better than anticipated for teaching funding, but had a disappointing decrease in funding for research and knowledge transfer. The poor outcome of the Employee Engagement Survey was also discussed and the Principal reaffirmed that the key issues were in the process of being addressed at a variety of levels.
- 4.9 Academic Board **noted** the report.

5. UPDATE ON COLLABORATION WITH CARNEGIE COLLEGE (AB(11/12)32)

- 5.1 The Principal reported the background to this initiative, which had last been considered by the Board in 2009. It was noted that there was no firm proposal at this time, but that discussions were continuing between representatives of the two institutions regarding the future relationship.
- 5.2 The two institutions were noted to have enjoyed a close and productive relationship over many years, which had resulted in many benefits, including helping the University progress its strategy of widening access to higher education. The recently stated plans of the Scottish Government with regard to access, along with the initiatives on regionalisation for colleges, had given impetus to look again at the relationship. A new funding arrangement was expected to be in place for Colleges from autumn 2012.
- 5.3 The good work undertaken in 2008/09 had provided a platform on which to assess the different options available. Much work had been undertaken in a short period of time and a report was to be submitted to Court in late March. The prime consideration would be whether the University is advantaged by

having the arrangements. It was emphasised that the initiative was led by academic considerations, in particular the close fit between the institutions. Other benefits would follow from that. It was expected that any formalisation of this relationship with Carnegie would not jeopardise any of the University's relationships with other colleges.

- 5.4 It was noted that Dr Webber was a member of the Carnegie College Board of Management but that he had agreed for the time being not to be involved in discussions regarding the relationship between Edinburgh Napier and Carnegie College.
- 5.5 It was reported that discussions had taken place among senior management to identify alignment in the curriculum. Particular matches were evident in Business and Engineering disciplines, with digital media and social sciences also clear. There had been longstanding collaboration, including articulation of Carnegie students onto Edinburgh Napier programmes, which could be built upon to further improve choice for learners. Sharing facilities would also bring benefit. It was suggested that exciting new models of learning would be possible in any new arrangement, including work-based learning. The University's ability to offer consultancy and other activities would also be strengthened.
- 5.6 One option was noted to be the creation of a new Tertiary institution, offering the full swathe of post-16 qualifications from Highers to Doctorates with multiple entry and exit points. Constitutionally the institution would likely be titled 'Edinburgh Napier University' although the Fife provision would be protected. It would be important not to lose the College identity and ethos. Reassurance was given that this move would not 'dumb down' Edinburgh Napier's provision, rather what would be created would be new and visionary. Due diligence would be done. It was suggested that there would be potential complications, as with any close relationship, but it was believed that these would not be insurmountable.
- 5.7 It was noted that the positive feedback of the Board would be reported to Court and would also help inform further discussions with Carnegie. It was further noted that an announcement would be made shortly to staff and that therefore the previous exemption on the paper, claimed under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, could be lifted.

6. ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO REVIEW – INTERIM SUMMARY REPORT

(AB(11/12)33)

- 6.1 The Board received the report which gave an interim summary of the common themes in the portfolio review. A final report would be received at the next meeting. It was noted that work continued with workshops, informed by Planning & Intelligence, assessing the future University portfolio. A prime driver was the maintenance of academic excellence and the strengthening of the student experience.

6.2 The paper highlighted areas for further consideration in the process of ensuring that the portfolio is fit for purpose. It was further noted that there would be a cross-curricular programme event later in the year to look at scope for further interdisciplinarity. This was welcomed although caution was expressed to not add complexity and to assess the impact on programme leaders. Modes of assessment were also flagged for future consideration. The report was **noted**.

7. REPORT ON REVIEW OF LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY (AB(11/12)34)

7.1 The Board received the paper, which was noted to be an early topic for discussion with the new Vice Principal. It was noted that the review had highlighted the University having a very committed body of staff, which was under some pressure. It was also evident that many hurdles could be overcome through common sense and were not ingrained in University policies and procedures.

7.2 The Board welcomed and **noted** the report.

8. REPORT ON REVIEW OF RESEARCH STRATEGY (AB(11/12)35)

8.1 The Board received the paper, which was noted to be the outcome of a mid-term review of the Strategy. It was noted that the prosecution of the Strategy was affected by changing external factors and the University's responses to them. It was emphasised that research was central to the University's activities; however the funding regime was becoming increasingly difficult.

8.2 Against this background it was noted that the preparations were well underway for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise in 2014. It was explained that since future funding largely depended on the outcome of REF, that activity should be tailored towards that, whilst protecting emerging areas. It was therefore proposed to target funding towards niche areas of excellence whilst also continuing to support infrastructure to ensure sustainability.

8.3 In discussion, the Board considered the implications of the reduction in income through change in Funding Council policy and also through the loss of key staff (and their grants) to other institutions. It was stated that existing staff required support. The Board explored the means of identifying 3* and 4* staff and the implications of a 'critical mass' approach. It was suggested that the Faculty Academic Boards could help the difficult discussions.

8.4 The Board underscored its support for research activity and **agreed in principle** the research strategy as outlined.

9. UNIVERSITY STRATEGY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (AB(11/12)36)

9.1 The Board received the annual report and **noted** the KPIs, which underpin the University's Strategy and permit the analysis of performance. The overall picture was noted to be very positive, and where some indicators showed a reduction in performance there were concomitant increases elsewhere. In

particular, the retention figure was now better than the SFC benchmark, which was a testament to the efforts across the University. The Board welcomed the news and looked forward to further improvements as a result of the on-going work in this vital area.

- 9.2 Against the context of the upward trend in the 'application to places' indicator, the Board welcomed the Principal's statement that the University would retain its strong commitment to widening access. It was noted that Student and Academic Services would continue to work with faculties to ensure that appropriate decisions are taken regarding recruitment. On-going work also continued with the University's college partners. It was suggested that a paper on regional coherence could be put to the next meeting.

**10. REPORT ON MID-TERM STUDENT MATRICULATION STATISTICS
(AB(11/12)37)**

- 10.1 The Board **noted** the latest student population figures.

**11. REPORT ON REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE REF
(AB(11/12)38)**

- 11.1 The Board received the update report and noted that the REF Planning Group had commenced its work and was supported by a dedicated Project Officer. The progress made to date was reported and the planned activity was noted.
- 11.2 It was noted that progress had been made in appointing Unit of Assessment (UoA) Champions, with most now in place. A code of practice was being drawn up on the fair and transparent selection of staff for submission. This would be followed closely and the importance was emphasised of ensuring an inclusive process. The selection of staff would be based solely on the quality of outputs and the alignment with the University's strategy. It was noted that some staff may be matched to different UoAs than their 'home' disciplines. It was also recognised that those staff who would not be selected would receive careful de-briefing and that appropriate safeguards for career development would be put in place. The importance of protecting emergent areas was emphasised.
- 11.3 It was noted that good communication was key to the success of the process and it was noted that some briefings had already taken place. Regular updates would be provided to staff via the Intranet and other channels. It was noted that clarity of message was important. It was further noted that the Board would also receive regular progress reports. It was suggested that future discussions might explore the required support structures and issues of funding prior to the submission and once the outcome is known.

- 11.4 The Board **noted** the report and thanked those involved for the on-going work.

**12. UPDATE REPORT ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEW STRUCTURE OF
THE TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE YEAR FROM SEPTEMBER 2012
(AB(11/12)39)**

- 12.1 The Board received the update report and noted that the project team continued its work to support the changes. Significant progress was noted to have been made and it was reported that a number of challenges remained. Confidence

remained high that these would be overcome through innovative solutions and the hard work and goodwill of staff in the faculties and the professional services.

12.2 The Board extended thanks to all those involved for the work being done and recognised that all possible support would be given to alleviate the particular 'pinch points' in 2012/13.

13. HONORARY AWARDS FOR APPROVAL (AB(11/12)48)

13.1 The Principal gave some background information on each of the proposed recipients of Honorary Awards detailed in the paper. The Board **agreed** to support the proposals and commended them to University Court for approval.

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.

PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

14. Minutes of Academic Ethics & Research Governance Committee meeting held on 1 November 2011 **AB(11/12)27**
15. Minutes of Academic Strategy & Enhancement Committee meeting held on 2 November 2011 **AB(11/12)28**
16. Minutes of Collaborative Provision Committee meeting held on 7 November 2011 **AB(11/12)29**
17. Minutes of Collaborative Provision Committee meeting held on 9 December 2011 **AB(11/12)40**
18. Minutes of FHLSS Faculty Academic Board meeting held on 25 January 2012 **AB(11/12)41**
19. Minutes of FECCI Faculty Academic Board meeting held on 31 January 2012 **AB(11/12)42**
20. Minutes of the Business School Faculty Academic Board meeting held on 2 February 2012 **AB(11/12)43 (next meeting)**
21. Minutes of Academic Ethics & Research Governance Committee meeting held on 7 February 2012 **AB(11/12)44 (next meeting)**
22. Minutes of Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting held on 23 February 2012 **AB(11/12)45 (next meeting)**
23. **STUDENT APPEALS, COMPLAINTS & CONDUCT: STATISTICS & ANNUAL REPORT (AB(11/12)46)**

The Board **agreed** to consider this item as part of the main agenda of the next meeting.
24. **REPORT ON UNIVERSITY KEY RISKS APPROPRIATE TO ACADEMIC BOARD (AB(11/12)47)**

This item was **noted** without discussion.

25. VALEDICTIONS

- 25.1 The Principal reported that this was to be the last Academic Board meeting of Professor Mackenzie and Mr Worden as they would both retire in April; and also of Mr Millar, who was due to graduate at the end of this session and could not attend the meeting in June due to other commitments.
- 25.2 The Board expressed its appreciation of the contribution made by Professor Mackenzie and Mr Worden to the Board and to the University as a whole in their various roles over several years. They were both wished a long and satisfying retirement.
- 25.3 Mr Millar was noted to have served as a student representative on the Board for three years. The Board thanked him for his contribution over that period and wished him well in his future career.
- 25.4 Subsequent to the meeting, it was noted that a further student representative, Mr Zhang, was also due to graduate at the end of this session and also could not attend the meeting in June. The Principal thanked him on behalf of the Board and wished him well in his future career.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

01 June 2012 at 9.00am, Room H9, Merchiston Campus.