

**APPROVED  
CIRCULATED**

**AB(11/12)66  
JMCD Mins**

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY COURT  
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 1 June 2012 at 9.00 am in  
The Castle Room, Craighouse 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); K Cairney (Director of International, Development & External Affairs); M Chapman (School of Life, Sport & Social Sciences); Professor C Fairfield (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); S Falconer (Head of School from the Business School); Professor E Hart (Professoriate); Dr P Jaworski (School of Management); R Kemmer (School of Computing); C Lambert (Director, Student and Academic Services); Professor A McCleery (Leader of Research Strategy & Practice); Professor R Mackenzie (Vice-Principal, Commercialisation); Dr S Marr (School of Marketing, Tourism & Languages); 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); Professor A Sambell (Vice-Principal, Academic); S Smith (Head of School from the Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Professor S Smith (Director from the Research Institutes); Dr K Smyth (Teaching Fellows/Senior Teaching Fellows).

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

J McDermott (Governance Officer) (Clerk)

**APOLOGIES:**

Dr J Donaldson (Head of School from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); Professor J Duffield (Vice-Principal, Strategy, Resources & External Affairs); A Hobbs (Student Representative from the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); R Holmes (School of Accounting, Financial Services and Law); I McIntosh (Dean, Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences); A Millar (Student Representative from the Business School); Professor G Stonehouse (Dean, the Business School); 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).

**1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed members to the meeting, making particular mention of Professor Sambell, who was attending his first Board meeting since joining the University. The Convenor further noted that Mr McIntosh had been appointed Dean of the Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences, having served in an acting capacity following the retirement of Professor Prowse.
- 1.2 The apologies were **noted**

**PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2012 (AB(11/12)49)**

- 2.1 The minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the previous meeting, with an amendment to paragraph 5.5 to remove an inaccurate reference to the numbers of students articulating.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

**a) Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland (Minute 4.2)**

- 3.1 The Principal reported that there was no indication that the Cabinet Secretary would bring forward proposals arising from the review in the foreseeable future. There was, however, a possibility that elements might be included in a Further & Higher Education Bill later in the Parliament. Should this be the case, Academic Board would likely wish to discuss the matter at the appropriate time.

**b) HK Campus (Minute 4.6)**

- 3.2 This topic was reported in the Principal's Report, below.

**c) Carnegie Collaboration (Minute 4.5)**

- 3.3 The Principal confirmed that the proposed merger with Carnegie College was not now being pursued. This had been announced to staff once it had become clear that the preference of the Scottish Government was for Carnegie to join with Adam Smith College to create an FE institution for the Kingdom of Fife.
- 3.4 Edinburgh Napier would continue to work closely with this new regional college to build upon existing links in an on-going mutually beneficial relationship. The Board would be kept updated accordingly. The information was **noted**.

**d) Update on preparations for the new structure of the taught postgraduate year from September 2012 (Minute 12)**

- 3.5 It was noted that Academic Board has previously confirmed that postgraduate assessment would take place after Christmas, with postgraduate examinations taking place the week beginning 14 January in 2012. Following consultation with Faculties and Professional Services, the Changes to the Postgraduate Academic Year Working group recommended that postgraduate assessment should take place the week beginning 7 January. This would separate out postgraduate examinations and undergraduate induction after Christmas thereby reducing pressure on timetabling and staffing.
- 3.6 The Board **noted** that postgraduate assessment week would take place immediately after Christmas in 2012/13. Future academic calendars would also be amended accordingly.

**4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (AB(11/12)50)**

- 4.1 The Principal highlighted key elements of her written report, noting in particular the outcome of the Funding Council spending review. It was noted that the Teaching Grant had been restored to 2010/11 levels, with a commitment to broadly maintain that for two years (with certain conditions regarding 'Outcome Agreements'). The grant allocation was in cash terms and so the University was still exposed to inflationary pressures. However the 'squeeze' was less

than might have been anticipated and the University would be able to cope. The University's Research funding, however, had been reduced significantly from £2m to £1.5m. The Executive was exploring ways to ameliorate the impact of this 25% drop and discussions would be on-going during the planning process. The continuing preparations for the REF submission were also being taken into account, as were the needs of the Research Institutes. It was noted that a paper would be put to the October Board meeting with an overview of the implications for REF and further ahead.

- 4.2 With regard to international developments, it was noted that international business was an increasingly important part of the University's profile. Edinburgh Napier had been very successful both in bringing students to study in Scotland and in delivering programmes overseas. The public debate on the consequences of the UK Government's policies with regard to international students was therefore very pertinent to the University. Against that backdrop, increasing focus was being put on delivery overseas, and several Scottish universities were now expanding this provision.
- 4.3 Feasibility work was still underway regarding the potential development in Hong Kong and there was nothing tangible yet to report. However, should the due diligence prove positive and it was decided to pursue any invitation to tender from the Hong Kong Government, a full discussion would be held at Academic Board. Issues to be taken into account would likely include ensuring that any campus would have a sufficient spread of disciplines. It was noted that an option was being explored with another institution regarding a possible joint venture. In the meantime, a long-standing Hong Kong based benefactor of the University had donated a £0.5m gift to support scholarships in the region.
- 4.4 Further aspects of the report were discussed, including the on-going work to monitor the changing tuition fee environment and respond accordingly; and the outcome of the UCAS admissions process review. The disappointing position of Edinburgh Napier in some of the latest 'League Tables' was noted. It was contended that this was not a true reflection on the calibre of work going on in the University. Work was underway to ensure that data submitted in future is robust and verified. It was noted that the League Tables were increasingly important to inform choices of potential students.
- 4.5 An item too late for inclusion in the written report was the 'Green League' result – in which Edinburgh Napier had been ranked top out of the Scottish universities for the second year running. This good news was welcomed, although it was recognised that there were still many areas that could be improved in this respect. Congratulations were extended to the team involved in preparing the submission, particularly Jamie Pearson, of Property & Facilities.
- 4.6 Academic Board **noted** the report.

## **5. SFC OUTCOME AGREEMENTS**

- 5.1 As reported in the previous item, an important aspect of the SFC settlement was the expansion of the 'Outcome Agreements' (OAs). It was becoming increasingly apparent that there was a large number of issues to be examined

beneath the headline topics. Discussions were on-going regarding the OAs for next year. The principles included the encroachment upon institutional autonomy if significant elements of funding were conditional upon meeting externally imposed targets. A further aspect was that the performance metrics may not reward marginal improvement upon already good performance. In addition it was suggested that in one key area – articulation – the University had little control over the supply of entrants from colleges and could therefore potentially be penalised through no fault of its own.

- 5.2 Whilst the current stated objectives for the OAs were broadly in line with the University's strategy, it was possible that in future the University could be pushed in an unwelcome direction. The complexity of the funding equations also gave cause for concern, as did some proposed targets that were held to be unreasonable.
- 5.3 In discussion members related their experience elsewhere in the sector and confirmed that there was uniform shared concern. It was also noted that there was a body of experience in the local authorities, which had been dealing with OAs for several years.
- 5.4 It was **agreed** that the significant concerns of the Board should be reported to the Funding Council. It was important to relate the strength of view as Academic Board was the guardian of the University's academic standards and policies. University Court would also be asked to consider the issue.

**6. ELIR REPORT - ONE YEAR ON (AB(11/12)51)**

- 6.1 The Board received the report which gave a draft of the University's one-year-on response to ELIR before it would be submitted to QAA Scotland in August 2012. It was noted that the final, submitted version would be presented for information to the Board and to University Court in October.
- 6.2 It was noted that whilst there were some areas identified for improvement, overall the Report was very positive and reflected excellent practice across the University. The highlights included the Personal Development Tutor scheme; the continuing work with NSA to enhance the student experience; and the excellent work undertaken by the Research Degrees Assessment Board under the leadership of Professor Atton to focus on the research student experience. Other factors were noted to be the accreditation for supervising staff; and the work on retention that had ensured the University exceeded its targets and benchmarks.
- 6.3 In discussion the Board recognised and expressed its appreciation of the efforts of staff in delivering on the several themes reported. A concern was expressed, however, that staff were being asked to deliver more with fewer resources. It was noted that these concerns would be picked up in the forthcoming open meetings to be conducted by the Vice Principal (Academic).
- 6.4 The Board welcomed the report and **agreed** to commend it for submission, with any further amendments signed off by the Vice Principal (Academic).

**7. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL (AB(11/12)52)**

- 7.1 The Board received the draft Annual Report, which was due to be considered by University Court in June prior to submission to the Funding Council in September. It was noted that the Quality Assurance, Monitoring & Review Committee and then the Academic Strategy & Enhancement Committee had considered the detail of the report and both had endorsed the outcome following detailed feedback. The contribution was recognised of colleagues in the Faculties and Student & Academic Services for preparing the report and for the very positive on-going work that it reported upon.
- 7.2 It was noted that the Report represented very good practice across the University and highlighted that the institution had a clear agenda focussed on enhancing the student experience. A number of innovative practices had been recognised and real progress continued to be made. The Board expressed its appreciation of the efforts of staff. It was noted that instances of innovative practices and other 'good news' stories should be passed on to the Communications team.
- 7.3 The Board welcomed the report and **agreed** to commend it to University Court for approval. It was further **agreed** that the Vice Principal (Academic) would be authorised to sign off the final submission to the Funding Council in September.

**8. STUDENT APPEALS, COMPLAINTS & CONDUCT: STATISTICS & ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11 (AB(11/12)46)**

- 8.1 The Board received the paper, which had been deferred from the previous meeting so that the Board could give proper attention to its key themes. It was noted that the Quality Assurance, Monitoring & Review Committee had also considered the detailed report. A number of the emerging issues had been taken into account during the review of Regulations. In particular the Report had informed the adoption fresh processes, including an emphasis on seeking early resolution of cases. Student & Academic Services was giving active assistance in the matter to schools, faculties and other professional services. It was anticipated that this would result in a reduction in the number of appeals. The new procedure would also close a loophole with regard to complaints. It was emphasised that the speed of dealing with cases was important to reduce difficulties.
- 8.2 The Board **noted** the report.

**9. REVISED STUDENT COMPLAINTS REGULATIONS (AB(11/12)53)**

- 9.1 The Board received the revised regulations, which had been prepared by a working group and given thorough consideration by the Regulations Committee and then the Academic Strategy & Enhancement Committee. As they contained elements that affect staff more broadly than just in academic matters, the regulations would be put to Court for approval. In discussion, it was noted that some further minor amendments would be made. The efforts of the working group were recognised and appreciation was offered to the convenor, Mr Morrison, and the members, in particular Ms Mizen and Mr Bews who had made detailed expert contributions.

9.2 The Board welcomed the clearer and simplified process and **agreed** to commend it to University Court for approval.

**10. KEY INFORMATION SET (KIS)**

**(AB(11/12)54)**

10.1 The Board received the paper, which reported the preparations underway on a very short timescale for the University to respond to a national initiative. It was noted that although English institutions had been given a longer lead time to prepare Key Information Sets (KIS), the requirement for Scottish institutions to do the same had only recently been communicated. The publication date for all institutions was September 2012.

10.2 In order to meet this timescale, an internal 'sign off' date had been set for July. Significant work was already underway in the professional services and faculties to prepare the information that would populate the KIS and to ensure that it is robust. It was noted that the information would be available to all prospective applicants and those who advise them. The potential implications were noted for the University's recruitment, reputation and provision of public information.

10.3 In advance of the KIS being made public, an internal communication strategy would be put into effect to ensure that staff would be aware of the information and able to answer queries accordingly. Board members were asked to assist with the communication to staff by sharing the information with colleagues and encouraging staff engagement with the process.

10.4 It was noted that as the work progressed, the processes would become more streamlined and once established the on-going updating of the KIS would be more straightforward. The process of verification of the data was agreed to be highly important. It was further noted that the exercise was also assisting the identification of issues that are of concern to prospective students. This tied in with the on-going market research on student expectations.

10.4 Gratitude was expressed to all the staff working towards preparing the KIS; and it was noted that colleagues from across the University were involved. The report was **noted**.

**11. STUDENT CHARTER**

**(AB(11/12)55)**

11.1 The Board received the updated Student Charter, which had been considered and endorsed at the Academic Strategy & Enhancement Committee. The Students' Association had also given its support. It was noted that there had been significant work over a period of time to update the Charter. Extensive consultation had also been undertaken and the final document had been reviewed for 'Plain English'. Members welcomed the updated Charter and commended its clarity. Thanks were offered to those involved in its preparation, particularly Ms Johnston of Student & Academic Services, who had led the process and made detailed input.

11.2 The Board **approved** the Student Charter for adoption by the University.

**12. STUDENT-NOMINATED EXCELLENCE AWARDS (AB(11/12)65)**

12.1 The Board expressed its appreciation of the NSA awards scheme, which recognises the contributions of members of staff to the student experience. There had been a large number of staff nominated by the student body.

12.2 The Board welcomed the very positive and constructive exercise and extended congratulations to all those who had been recognised in the scheme. It was noted that the Principal intended to write to each of the staff listed in the paper.

**13. HONORARY AWARDS (AB(11/12)56)**

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.

**14. PROPOSED VISITING TEACHING FELLOWSHIP (AB(11/12)57)**

14.1 After considering the case presented in the paper from the Business School, the Board **agreed** to confer a Visiting Teaching Fellowship upon Professor Poonam Kumar for an initial period of three years.

**15. ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW / YEAR-ON REPORT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES OF ACADEMIC BOARD REVIEW (AB(11/12)58)**

15.1 Members considered its operation over Session 2011/12 and a consensus view was **agreed** that the Board had undertaken its business in effective and appropriate manner in the preceding year. Members were invited to submit any specific comments to the Clerk using the table in Annex 1. These would then be collated to inform the on-going work of the Board.

15.2 The Board also considered matters that had been raised by its sub-committees during a 'one-year-on' review. This had been arranged after the new terms of reference had been launched in September 2011. A request from the Academic Ethics Research Governance Committee to change its name to the 'University Research Integrity Committee' was **agreed**. The titles of the related Faculty-level committees would also change.

15.3 It was **agreed** that the remaining feedback would be considered over the summer in a process under the aegis of the Vice Principal (Academic). A further report would be submitted, if necessary, to the next Board meeting.

**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.

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| 14. Minutes of the Business School Faculty Academic Board meeting held on 2 February 2012      | <b>AB(11/12)43<br/>(Professor Stonehouse)</b> |
| 15. Minutes of Academic Ethics & Research Governance Committee meeting held on 7 February 2012 | <b>AB(11/12)44<br/>(Professor McCleery)</b>   |

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| 16. Minutes of Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting held on 23 February 2012   | <b>AB(11/12)45<br/>(Professor McCleery)<br/><i>(to be submitted to next meeting)</i></b> |
| 17. Minutes of Collaborative Provision Committee meeting held on 27 February 2012         | <b>AB(11/12)59<br/>(R Pelik)</b>   |
| 18. Minutes of Academic Strategy & Enhancement Committee meeting held on 29 February 2012 | <b>AB(11/12)60<br/>(R Pelik)</b>   |
| 19. Minutes of FECCI Faculty Academic Board meeting held on 20 March 2012                 | <b>AB(11/12)61<br/>(Dr Cairncross)</b>   |
| 20. Minutes of the Business School Faculty Academic Board meeting held on 21 March 2012   | <b>AB(11/12)62<br/>(Professor Stonehouse)</b>  |
| 21. Minutes of FHLSS Faculty Academic Board meeting held on 21 March 2012                 | <b>AB(11/12)63<br/>(Mr McIntosh)</b>   |

**PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- 22. REPORT ON UNIVERSITY KEY RISKS APPROPRIATE TO ACADEMIC BOARD** **(AB(11/12)64)**

This item was **noted** without discussion.

**26. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2012/13:**

Friday **05 October 2012**, 9.00am, Castle Room, Craighouse Campus;  
Friday **23 November 2012**, 9.00am, Castle Room, Craighouse Campus;  
Friday **01 March 2013**, 9.00am, Room 1/37, Craiglockhart Campus;  
Friday **31 May 2013**, 9.00am, Room 1/37, Craiglockhart Campus.