

**AB(15/16)12**

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY COURT**

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 9.00 am in  
The Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

**Present:**

Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); Professor A Sambell (Deputy Vice Chancellor); Dr S Cairncross (Assistant Principal, Student Experience); Dr K Chalmers (School Academic Lead, Quality Enhancement); Dr N Cimini (Lecturer, School of Life, Sport & Social Science); Professor L Dryden (School Academic Lead, Research); Mr S Falconer (Interim Dean, Business School); Dr A Fonzone (Lecturer, School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Dr A Gavis (Lecturer, Business School); Ms S Goddard (President, ENSA); Dr J Hails (Senior Lecturer, School of Arts & Creative Industries); Professor E Hart (Professor, School of Computing); Ms E Hofland (ENSA Rep); Dr G Hutchison (Dean, School of Life, Sport and Social Science); Mr M Innes (Senior Lecturer, School of Arts & Creative Industries); Mr R Kemmer (Senior Lecturer, School of Computing); Professor J Kennedy (Dean, Research & Innovation Office); Ms C Lambert (Director, Student & Academic Services); Mr R Lannon (School Academic Lead, Quality Enhancement); Dr D MacLean (School Academic Lead, Learning & Teaching); Ms P Miller-Judd (Dean, School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr L Muir (Associate Professor, School of Computing); Dr B Neades (Senior Lecturer, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Professor B Paechter (School Academic Lead, Research); Ms A Sharp (Lecturer, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Professor I Smith (Dean, School of Engineering & Built Environment); Professor G Stonehouse (Assistant Principal, Internationalisation); Mr D Telford (Director, Information Services); Professor B Webster-Henderson (Dean, Learning & Teaching).

**Apologies:**

Dr M Foster (School Academic Lead, Learning & Teaching); Professor T Humphrey (Dean, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Ms A McMillan (ENSA Rep); Ms S Smith (Dean, School of Computing); Mr P Tar (ENSA Rep); Dr E Theodoraki (Associate Professor, Business School).

**In attendance:**

D Cloy (Assistant Secretary); G Ingram (Governance Officer) (Clerk); Dr G C Webber (University Secretary).

**Observing:**

Sheila Meehan (Clerk to the Council, Scottish Funding Council).

**1. Opening Remarks, Welcome & Apologies**

- 1.1 The Convenor welcomed members to the first meeting of the newly constituted Academic Board and extended a particular welcome to all new members.

1.2 Ms Sheila Meehan from the Scottish Funding Council who was observing the meeting as part of her professional development was also welcomed.

1.3 The apologies were **noted**.

## **PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 12 JUNE 2015.**

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

### **3. Matters Arising**

3.1 There were no matters arising

### **4. Academic Board Membership & Terms of Reference**

4.1 The Board's terms of reference and membership under its new constitution were **noted**.

4.2 The re-election of Mr Kemmer as the member of Academic Board to serve on University Court was also **noted**.

### **5. Principal's Report**

5.1 The Principal introduced her written report and invited questions and comments from Board members. A summary of the main provisions of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill which had been introduced to the Scottish Parliament in June was presented. A number of issues and their potential implications for the University's governing body were highlighted. Of particular note were the proposals regarding the election of the Chair of Court and the granting of powers to ministers to determine the composition of both governing bodies and academic boards.

5.2 It was noted that reclassification as a central government body by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) was a key risk which would have a profound financial impact on the University, effecting in particular the ability to develop an optimum investment strategy and restricting the commercial activities in which the University could legitimately engage.

5.3 Recent developments in relation to immigration policy affecting international students were also highlighted. Members were advised that the Home Office had commenced a consultation with a view to potentially increasing the minimum English language requirements for international students.

5.4 Finally, the positive progress made by the University in the recently published Times and Sunday Times league table was welcomed.

5.5 Thereafter Academic Board **noted** the report.

## 6. University Structures Project/ Career Development

6.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor provided an update on the Academic Structures/ Career Development and Leadership Development Projects. A summary of activity under the main strands of the project was provided and it was noted that all actions were either complete or on track to be completed by the agreed deadlines.

6.2 Discussion followed during which members acknowledged the varied impact that low success rates in the promotion and award of title round had on academic staff. Members emphasised the importance of detailed and constructive feedback for those staff members who had been unsuccessful in securing promotion.

6.3 The Deputy Vice Chancellor assured members that the needs of unsuccessful candidates had been and were being considered, but expressed the view that the new promotion criteria were appropriate and necessary in order to assist the University in achieving its academic ambitions.

6.4 Thereafter Academic Board **noted** the report.

## 7. Estates Strategy

7.1 The University Secretary provided an update on the main strands of the University's draft Estates Strategy. It was noted that the purpose of the strategy was to establish a coherent framework for future development that was based on principles aligned to the University's overarching strategy and values.

7.2 The main themes of improving teaching & learning space and enhancing postgraduate and research facilities were welcomed by members. The agreed set of values and principles which had been identified to drive the strategy forward were noted, along with the commitment to invest in new facilities for Engineering and the Built Environment.

7.3 The intention to create inspiring and innovative spaces and establish conference and exhibition / archiving facilities was warmly welcomed by members.

7.4 The indicative timescales for development and levels of investment required to realise the objectives of the strategy were noted.

7.5 Members were assured that lines of communication would remain open as the strategy evolved and that staff and students would be consulted to shape plans as they matured.

7.6 Thereafter Academic Board **noted** the update.

## **8. Planning & Budgeting Process**

8.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor introduced the paper which outlined the planning and budgeting cycle in 2015/16.

8.2 The links to the corporate plan and prioritisation for areas of investment were highlighted. Improvements to the planning process were also **noted**.

8.3 Thereafter Academic Board **noted** the report.

## **9. Report on Student Surveys**

9.1 Academic Board considered the paper which outlined key themes emerging from the student satisfaction surveys undertaken by the University and identified areas of strength and weaknesses.

9.2 Discussion followed during which it was noted that assessment and feedback remained an area of concern in the NSS. Student and staff engagement was also recognised to be a key priority. The need for greater consistency with regards to developing and executing action plans at both school and programme level was agreed.

9.3 The overall improvement in the PTES scores was welcomed and **noted**. The steps being taken to improve the experience of PGR students were highlighted.

9.4 The importance of acting on the feedback provided by students was recognised and endorsed. Members were reminded of the internal mechanisms that already existed to collect feedback on activities and services and how this data was used to improve the student experience.

9.5 Thereafter, members **noted** the report.

## **PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES**

Academic Board received the minutes of the following meetings.

**10.** Minutes of the Learning, teaching & Assessment Committee held 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015

**11.** Minutes from the Research & Innovation Committee held 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

**12.** Minutes from the Student Experience Committee held 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015

## **PART C      ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **13. ELIR Final Report**

13.1 The Board **noted** the final submitted report and action plan with regards to the University's 2015 Enhancement Led Institutional Review

### **14. Annual Report to SFC**

14.1 The Board **noted** the final submitted annual report to the SFC on institutional-led processes to maintain and enhance academic quality.

### **15. Forward Schedule of Business**

15.1 The Board **noted** the indicative forward schedule of business for 2015/16.

### **16. Schedule of Meetings 2015/16**

11 December 2015

26 February 2016

03 June 2016

All at 9.00am in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus.