

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28th October 2013
at 3.45 pm in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

Present: Dr G. Forbes (Chairman); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Ms M. Ali; Ms J. Boyle; Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor); Mr M. Connarty; Professor J. Duffield (Vice-Principal, Strategy, Resources & External Relations); Dr V. Ellis; Mr R. Hare; Mr W. Gallagher; Mr R. Kemmer; Dr S. Jiwa; Mr S. Logie; Mr R. Maclennan; Mr R Malcolm; Mr B. Rigby; Professor A. Sambell (Vice Principal, Academic); Mr D Smith; Dr P. Stollard; Mr R. Sweetman; Mrs P. Woodburn.

Apologies: Mr N. Ballantyne.

In attendance: Mr D Cloy (Clerk to Court); Mrs M Cook (Director of Human Resources); Mr C MacDonald (Acting Director of Finance); Dr G Webber (University Secretary).

1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2013/14 Academic year and welcomed Daniel Smith (NSA President), Rob Malcolm (NSA Vice President Reps & Volunteers), Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor) and our new Principal Professor Andrea Nolan to their first Court meeting.
- 1.2. The apologies were noted.

Part A: For Discussion and Decision

2. PRESENTATION: RESEARCH STRATEGY

- 2.1. The Vice Principal (Academic) gave a presentation on the development of a new University Research Strategy, in which it was asserted that high quality research was critical to the future success of the University and proposed that it should be fully integrated with other academic activity, in particular the taught portfolio, to ensure its relevance to students and academic staff. It was envisaged that research engagement for academic staff should be the norm and that research should underpin the entire academic portfolio. It was noted that this had been discussed at the last meeting of Academic Board, which had welcomed the vision for research at Edinburgh Napier University presented.
- 2.2. Discussion followed, during which Court welcomed the broad vision for research presented. It was recognised that realising this vision for research would require a significant cultural shift and that recruitment of academic staff in future, along with support and development for existing staff would be key to

achieving it. It was also recognised that it was important to find ways to create the space within academic staff workloads to allow research to take place and a number of ways in which this might be enabled, including the targeting of resources and freeing up of time by rationalising the taught portfolio, were outlined. It was noted that consultation with staff and students would continue to take place over the coming months and that actions were already underway to put in place appropriate arrangements for recruitment, recognition, progression and reward which would enable the realisation of the eventual strategy.

- 2.3. The paper under item 15 (UC(13/14)14) "Review of Research Institutes" was introduced at this point, and the proposed next steps in relation to the development of the research institute structures within the University were outlined. It was noted that consultation was taking place on a proposal to move research institute activity into academic Schools to enable the alignment of research and teaching and to ensure this would be sustainable. It was noted that Court would receive an update on this matter at a future meeting.
- 2.4. Thereafter, Court welcomed the presentation.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2013 UC(13/14)01

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2013 were **approved**.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1. No matters arising were identified.

5. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

a) Court and Court Committee Membership UC(13/14)02

- 5.1. Court **noted** its membership and the convenorship and membership of its Committees for 2013/14.
- 5.2. On recommendation from the Nominations Committee, Court **approved** the appointment of Pamela Woodburn as Vice Chair of Court for the duration of her current term of office on Court.

b) Adoption of Scottish Code of Good HE Governance UC(13/14)03

- 5.3. Court discussed the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance and noted some expressions of concern from members. It was noted that adoption of the code was stated in the preface to be on a "comply or explain" basis and that it was anticipated that the SFC would shortly recognise the Code as the base document for determining principles of good governance under the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013. It was agreed that straightforward changes required to ensure compliance with the Code should be implemented immediately, with more complex issues being considered through the Court Effectiveness Review. It was also agreed that Court would receive an assessment of the University's compliance against the new Code as at December 2013 at its next meeting.
- 5.4. Thereafter, Court **agreed** to adopt the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

c) Court Effectiveness Review Proposal

UC(13/14)04

- 5.5. Court **approved** the proposal for the conduct of an effectiveness review of the Court during the 2013/14 academic session.

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

UC(13/14)05

- 6.1. The Principal introduced her written report and briefly highlighted the current position regarding student recruitment and her recent visit to India.
- 6.2. Court was advised of the strike due to take place on 31 October involving members of the Unison, UCU and Unite trade unions in response to the final 1% pay offer from UCEA. It was noted that the University would be open as normal and that significant disruption was not anticipated. It was further noted that appropriate arrangements were in place to minimise the impact on students, and to ensure health and safety requirements were met.
- 6.3. The headline statements from the Scottish Government's letter of guidance to the Scottish Funding Council were also noted.
- 6.4. In relation to Graduate Employability, it was agreed that a more detailed breakdown of the figures would be circulated to members.
- 6.5. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT: PROVISIONAL OUTTURN FOR 2012/13

UC(13/14)06

- 7.1. The Acting Finance Director introduced the paper which presented the primary statements from the draft accounts which had been submitted for audit. It was noted that the actual draft outturn for 2012/13 of £5.3m was broadly in line with the Quarter 3 forecast presented to Court in June 2013 taking account of the issues which were uncertain at that time, but which were anticipated to have an impact on the overall results. A number of these issues that had now crystallised and their impact upon the draft outturn were explained.
- 7.2. Court **noted** the report.

8. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

UC(13/14)07

- 8.1. The Principal introduced the paper which set out a process and timescale for discussion and consultation on the development of a new University Strategy for the period to 2020. It was emphasised that this process was designed to be as inclusive as possible and provide an opportunity for staff, students, trade union representatives and external stakeholders to offer their views, insights and knowledge to the evidence base which would underpin the revised strategy document.
- 8.2. Discussion followed during which members welcomed the process, the timescale and the breadth and depth of consultation proposed. It was noted that the process had been well received by staff and students as a genuine

attempt to engage with them, which they welcomed. It was further noted that consideration was being given as to the best way to engage external stakeholders in the process both locally, nationally and internationally.

- 8.3. Thereafter, Court **endorsed** the process for the development of the University's Strategy to 2020.

9. HONG KONG CAMPUS PROJECT: FINAL REPORT UC(13/14)08*

- 9.1. The Principal introduced the report which updated Court on the work undertaken to consider the potential opportunity for a University campus development at the Queen's Hill site in Hong Kong including the due diligence carried out and an assessment of the current political landscape in the region. The report recommended that the University should not further pursue its interest in the Queen's Hill site.
- 9.2. It was noted that, through the work undertaken, the University now had a better understanding of the Hong Kong market, had enhanced its profile in the region and built valuable relationships with government, business and funders. It was also noted that experience gained from the project and financial modelling undertaken had the potential to be transferable and to inform the assessment of other opportunities to develop a physical presence overseas. The potential to further develop and strengthen the University's existing activity and partnerships in Hong Kong including through applied research and consultancy was highlighted.
- 9.3. Discussion followed during which it was noted that funders remained supportive of the University's ambitions in the region and that lessons had been learned from the project, as outlined in the paper. It was agreed that it would be helpful to consider how Court would manage the governance issues arising from any such project in future, and that this matter could be considered as part of the Court Effectiveness Review. It was also noted that the international strategy would be reviewed and probably re-stated in due course.
- 9.4. Having considered the report and its recommendations, Court:
- a) **Agreed** that the University would not now bid for the Queen's Hill Site, even if a Request for Proposals is issued, and that this decision should be communicated to the Hong Kong government and more widely to other stakeholders.
 - b) **Agreed** that the University should not actively pursue, for the time being at least, identifying another site in Hong Kong for a campus development.
 - c) **Agreed** that the University should continue to demonstrate its ongoing strong commitment to Hong Kong and to seeking opportunities to work with current partnerships.
 - d) **Agreed** to dissolve the Hong Kong Project Working Group.

10. RUK TUITION FEES & STUDENT RECRUITMENT UC(13/14)09*

- 10.1. The Vice Principal (Academic) introduced the paper which provided Court with a summary of an analysis of Rest of UK (RUK) student recruitment trends and set out revisions for tuition fee levels for RUK undergraduate students for 2015 onwards as approved by the Principal following discussion at the Principal's Executive Group.
- 10.2. Discussion followed which focussed on consideration of the sum to be allocated for bursaries, and it was agreed that Court would receive further details on bursary provision at a future meeting.
- 10.3. Thereafter Court **noted** the paper and endorsed the decisions.

11. 2014/15 OUTCOME AGREEMENTS: UPDATE UC(13/14)10

11.1. The Vice Principal (Academic) introduced the paper which updated Court on the continuing development of Outcome Agreements with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The report also included a self-evaluation report on the University's 2012/13 Outcome Agreement for which Court's approval was sought. It was noted that Court would receive the 2014/15 Outcome Agreement at its December meeting.

11.2. Thereafter, Court:

a) **Approved** the 2012/13 Outcome Agreement self-evaluation report for submission to the SFC by 31 October.

b) **Delegated Authority** to the Principal to submit the 'well developed draft' of the 2014/15 Outcome Agreement to the SFC by its 29 November deadline.

12. HONORARY AWARDS UC(13/14)11*

- 12.1. Subject to any comments which members wished to make at the conclusion of the meeting, Court **approved** the proposals for Honorary Awards, as recommended by the Honorary Awards Committee and approved by Academic Board.
- 12.2. It was noted that in the case of a joint nomination, each individual would receive an award individually.

Part B: For Information

13. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 4 OCTOBER 2013 UC(13/14)12

13.1. Court **noted** the minutes of the meeting of Academic Board, held on 4 October 2013.

14. STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS FOR 2013/14 UC(13/14)13*

- 14.1. The Vice Principal (Strategy, Resources & External Relations) introduced the paper which summarised the decisions made by the Principal's Executive Group in the allocation of strategic investment funds for the 2013/14 financial year. It was noted that the investment themes outlined were being supported through further work via a Strategic Investment Group and Academic Investment Proposals sub-group.
- 14.2. In response to members' queries regarding the continuation of funding and level of funding for certain areas it was noted that these, and other investment decisions, would be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

15. REVIEW OF RESEARCH INSTITUTES UC(13/14)14*

- 15.1. This paper was discussed under item 2 earlier in the agenda. Court **noted** the paper.

Part C: Not Intended for Discussion

16. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES

- 16.1. Court received and **noted** reports from the following standing committees:

16.a Audit Committee meeting on 2 October 2013 UC(13/14)15

16.b Estates Committee meeting on 1 October 2013 UC(13/14)16

16.c Finance & Commercialisation Committee meeting on 25 July 2013 UC(13/14)17

16.d Finance & Commercialisation Committee meeting on 19 September 2013 UC(13/14)18

16.e Health & Safety Committee meeting on 9 October 2013 UC(13/14)19

- 16.2. The Convenor of the Health & Safety Committee highlighted that the University's Health and Safety Team had secured the RoSPA President's Award for ten consecutive annual Gold Awards, which recognised consistently high standards in the management of Occupational Health and Safety within the University. Court extended congratulations to the Team on this achievement.

16.f Nominations Committee meeting on 10 October 2013 UC(13/14)20*

17. IMPROVING LEAGUE TABLE PERFORMANCE: UPDATE UC(13/14)21

- 17.1. Court **noted** the paper, which provided an overview of the University's response to its falling position in national league tables, as requested at Court's June 2013 meeting.

17.2. In response to a query, it was reported that a number of new projects and activities were being pursued which were aimed at improving the University's position and which had not been previously undertaken. It was agreed that Court would consider the matter further at a future meeting.

**18. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COURT BUSINESS UC(13/14)22
FOR 2013/14**

18.1. Court **noted** the indicative forward schedule of business for 2013/14.

19. MEETING DATES FOR 2013/14

19.1. Court **noted** the dates of its future meetings.

*Denotes a paper to which an exemption under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies.