

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27th October 2014
at 3.45 pm in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

Present: Dr G. Forbes (Chair); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Ms M. Ali; Mr N. Ballantyne; Ms J. Boyle; Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor); Mr M. Connarty; Mr R. Hare; Mr W. Gallagher; Mr R. Kemmer; Mr S. Logie; Mr R. Maclennan; Mr B. Rigby; Professor A Scullion; Professor A. Sambell (Vice Principal, Deputy Vice Chancellor); Mr D Smith; Dr P. Stollard; Mr R Strachan; Mr R. Sweetman; Mrs P. Woodburn; Mr N Woodcock.

Apologies: Dr V. Ellis; Dr S. Jiwa; Professor G Stonehouse (Dean, Business School).

In attendance: Mr S Belfer (Finance Director); Dr S Cairncross (Dean, FECCI); Mr D Cloy (Clerk to Court); Mrs M Cook (Director of Human Resources); Mr I McIntosh (Dean, FHLSS); Dr A Ogilvie (Executive Manager (Strategy)); Mr A Quickfall (Head of Planning); Dr G Webber (University Secretary).

1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

- 1.1. The Chair mentioned the Pre-Court Strategy Presentation on Learning and Teaching which had taken place prior to the meeting, in which members had noted the range of activity underway to take forward this important strand of the Academic Strategy.
- 1.2. The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2014/15 Academic year and welcomed the newly appointed lay members Professor Adrienne Scullion and Mr Neil Woodcock to their first Court meeting. Simon Belfer (new Director of Finance) and the Deans of Faculty (now in attendance at Court as determined by the Court Effectiveness Review) were also welcomed to their first meeting. Andrew Quickfall (Head of Planning) and Dr Anita Ogilvie (Executive Manager (Strategy)), who were observing the meeting as part of their induction were also welcomed.
- 1.3. The apologies were noted.

Part A: For Discussion and Decision

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2014 UC(13/14)83

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2014 were **approved**, subject to an amendment to minute 8.2 to add that the remit of the Chancellor Appointment Group will include consideration of the proposal that there be an open and transparent process of appointment to the role of Chancellor's Assessor.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Investment Priorities (minute 6.5) UC(14/15)01

- 3.1. Further to agreement at the last Court meeting that it would be helpful to establish parameters against which the opportunities fund would be expended, members **noted** the communication outlining the fund criteria which had been sent to senior managers in August. Discussion followed during which the current situation regarding bids to access the fund was noted.

(ii) Voluntary Severance Scheme (minute 6.4)

- 3.2. The Principal provided an update on progress regarding the development of a proposal for the availability of a voluntary severance scheme. It was noted that this would come to Court in December following consideration by the Finance & Property Committee.

4. COURT AND COURT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UC(14/15)02

- 4.1. Court **noted** the outcome of the lay member recruitment exercise which had taken place over the summer and **approved** its committee convenorships and memberships for 2014/15.
- 4.2. In discussion it was noted that the reduction in the number of sub-committees following the Court Effectiveness Review meant a number of lay and staff Court members were no longer engaged in the work of sub-committees. It was noted that the creation of ad hoc short-life working groups would provide further opportunities for Court member involvement in sub-committees, and it was highlighted that the proposed Transnational Education Working Group on the agenda of this meeting included allocation of membership to a staff Court member.

5. PROPOSAL FOR CREATION OF SHORT-LIFE COURT SUB GROUP UC(14/15)03

- 5.1. The Principal introduced the paper which invited Court to approve a proposal to establish a short life ad-hoc sub group for Transnational Education.
- 5.2. Discussion followed during which the view was expressed that the Protocol for the Creation of Ad-Hoc Court Sub-Groups should be reviewed with regard to its provision that membership should, where appropriate, reflect the overall balance of Court membership. It was considered that membership should be determined with reference to appropriate skills and experience. It was agreed that a revised Protocol be brought back to the next meeting of Court for consideration.

- 5.3. Thereafter, Court **approved** the establishment of the short life sub-group as detailed in the paper.

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

UC(14/15)04

- 6.1. The Principal introduced her written report and briefly highlighted some of the main headings.
- 6.2. Court was advised that the University's recognised trade unions, EIS and Unison, had lodged a formal dispute with the University in relation to the inclusion of staff representatives who are not trade union representatives in the membership of the Academic Structures Advisory Board. It was noted that the dispute process was currently being followed and it was hoped that a good resolution would be achieved for both parties.
- 6.3. The publication of a recent article in the Sunday Times, where The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning had indicated his intention to take forward further legislation in relation to Higher Education Governance, was also noted.
- 6.4. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT: PROVISIONAL OUTTURN FOR 2013/14*

UC(14/15)05

- 7.1. The 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 2013/14 of £3.1m was £0.7m less than the Quarter 3 forecast presented to Court in June where a number of issues which were uncertain at that time were highlighted. It was noted that the outcome of these issues, together with the impact of previously unquantifiable technical adjustments had contributed to the reduced outturn and a summary of these issues was provided. It was noted that an alternative approach to the treatment of Holiday Pay accrual was likely which would increase the draft surplus to £4.4m. In response to members' queries, a number of points were clarified.
- 7.2. Court **noted** the current position in relation to the draft accounts for 2013/14 subject to completion of the external audit.

8. ACADEMIC STRATEGY

UC(14/15)06

- 8.1. The Vice Principal (Deputy Vice Chancellor) introduced the paper which presented the Academic Strategy 2014-20 which had been approved by the Academic Board at its meeting on 10 October, along with the Academic Themes which were also endorsed at that meeting.
- 8.2. Discussion followed during which Court welcomed the Strategy and Themes. It was agreed that rural sustainability should also be included within the definition of the theme Innovative, Sustainable Communities, which would be amended to

include reference to this. It was also noted that future presentation of the performance measures table would benefit from a clearer explanation of the data. It was noted that further work was underway to develop appropriate, staged performance measures for the Academic Strategy and other supporting Strategies, and that the outcome of this work would come to Court in due course. It was noted that Court would receive a report on performance against the approved corporate level KPIs at its next meeting. With reference to the University's current and developing flagship areas of academic activity, it was recognised that efforts were underway to review activity and free up resource to enable further investment in such areas and that investment decisions this year had been particularly focussed on these areas.

8.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the Academic Strategy and Academic Themes.

9. DEVELOPING OUR STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT STRATEGY 2020 UC(14/15)07

9.1. The Principal introduced the paper which presented proposals for changes to the University's academic structure, designed to develop leadership capacity and improve accountability and decision making in support of Strategy 2020, which the Academic Board had considered on 10 October and agreed should be taken forward through formal consultation with staff and students. It was noted that consultation was now taking place across the University on the disestablishment of the three faculties with the consequence that schools would become the primary academic units of the University. It was noted that the objective in removing the faculty layer would be to redeploy resources to strengthen the schools and corporate leadership, resulting in a more streamlined corporate management structure and a strengthened academic structure. The implications for school structure, committee structure, corporate management structure and professional services were noted as was the outline timetable for developing the proposals, consultation, decisions and implementation. It was highlighted that ULT had committed to there being no compulsory redundancies as a direct consequence of these proposals. It was noted that, following consultation, a proposal would be brought to the Academic Board for decision at its meeting on 5 December with the intention of introducing any new structure on 1 August 2015.

9.2. Discussion followed during which the benefits of pursuing such a revised structure were acknowledged, recognising that appropriate structures were enablers that would help facilitate achievement of the strategy. It was acknowledged that the timescale for introduction was challenging, but it was recognised that changes could only be made on 1 August each year, and that a process taking two years would be too long. It was agreed that it was desirable to conclude this period of inward focus within the stated time period to enable outward focus to quickly come to the fore again. It was noted that staff were generally positive about the proposals, welcomed the consultation process and were actively engaged in discussions through which the proposal was being developed and key implementation issues were being identified. The positive engagement of the Deans of Faculty was also acknowledged. In response to a

member's query regarding monitoring of staff engagement between employee engagement surveys it was noted that ULT received Investors in People (IIP) survey results annually which enabled interim monitoring. It was agreed that the recent report would be made available to Court members.

9.3. Thereafter, Court **endorsed** the paper and the consultation process underway.

10. HONORARY AWARDS

UC(14/15)08

10.1. Court **approved** the proposal for an Honorary Award, as recommended by the Honorary Awards Committee and approved by Academic Board.

Part B: For Information

11. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 10 OCTOBER 2014

UC(14/15)09

11.1. Court **noted** the minutes of the meeting of Academic Board, held on 10 October 2014.

12. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL ON INSTITUTION-LED REVIEW

UC(14/15)10

12.1. Court **noted** the final submitted 2013/14 annual report to the SFC on institution-led processes to maintain and enhance academic quality.

13. REPORT ON STUDENT SURVEYS

UC(14/15)11

13.1. Court **noted** the paper which presented student survey mechanisms, outcomes and structures in place to address the issues identified. This had been fully considered by Academic Board at its meeting on 10 October.

13.2. A member noted that it would be helpful for future papers on this matter to include a summary of key activities underway to address the weak areas identified. In response, the NSA President highlighted a number of key activities underway within the Students' Association to enhance the student experience and student engagement and the Vice Principal (Deputy Vice Chancellor) highlighted a number of key actions underway within the University in response to survey feedback. It was noted that good progress was being made, but that much work remained to be done.

Part C: Not Intended for Discussion

14. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES

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

14.a Finance & Property Committee meeting on 23 September 2014

UC(14/15)12

14.b Nominations Committee on 29 September 2014* **UC(14/15)13**

14.c Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 1 October 2014 **UC(14/15)14**

15. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COURT BUSINESS FOR 2014/15 **UC(14/15)15**

15.1. Court **noted** the indicative forward schedule of business for 2014/15. It was agreed that the March strategy briefing on research and innovation should also cover commercialisation.

16. MEETING DATES FOR 2014/15

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

16.2. Following the conclusion of Court's business, the Chair invited the NSA Sabbatical Officers and the Deans of Faculty to briefly update Court on significant activity underway within the NSA and Faculties. Court **noted** the update provided.

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