

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY**  
**UNIVERSITY COURT****Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28 October 2024**  
**at 3.45 pm in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus and by Videoconference**

**Present:** R Tomlinson (Chair); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Professor P Andras; Professor N Antonopoulos; R Cairns; D Chapman; Professor M Chipulu; J Chittleburgh; Professor S Cross (online); L Duncan; E Eghan; Q Miao; S Kumar (online); M Melville; T Oyinlola (online from item 9); Dr H Patrick; Lady Paton (Chancellor's Assessor); P Sim; P Upton (online); H Wareing; Professor L Yellowlees.

**Apologies:** P Alonzi; Dr K Hewitson.

**In attendance:** M Greenhalgh (Director of Strategy and Planning & Secretary to Court); C Begbie (Director of People & Services); D Cloy (Head of Governance & Risk); N Graham (Vice Principal, International) (online); A McGoff (Director of Finance & Operations); M Wilkinson (Head of Student Wellbeing & Inclusion) (item 10).

**1. OPENING REMARKS, APOLOGIES, DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHAIR'S UPDATES**

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. It was noted that the meeting had been preceded by a Pre-Court session on items of strategic importance covering SFC Funded Student Population, Nursing – Future Strategic Direction, International Environment/Student Recruitment and Project VISION.
- 1.2. The Chair welcomed new Court members Evans Eghan (ENSA President) and Helen Wareing (elected professional services staff member).
- 1.3. The apologies were **noted**.
- 1.4. Professor Yellowlees highlighted her SFC Board membership under declarations of members' interests.

**Part A For discussion and decision****2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2024 UC(23/24)63**

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2024 were **approved**.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

- 3.1. There were no matters arising.

#### **4. COURT AND COURT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP\* UC(24/25)01**

- 4.1. Court received the report from the meeting of Nominations Committee on 30 September 2024 and:
- (i) **Noted** its membership for 2024/25.
  - (ii) **Noted** the report on the Chair of Court Appointment Process and other Court membership matters.
  - (iii) **Approved** the final membership and convenorship of its standing committees for 2024/25.

#### **5. REPORT ON PRINCIPAL APPOINTMENT PROCESS AND OUTCOME UC(24/25)02**

- 5.1. Court received and **noted** the report which provided an overview of the process that was undertaken to appoint Professor Sue Rigby as Principal and Vice Chancellor of Edinburgh Napier University from 1 January 2025. It was agreed that the process followed had been rigorous, robust and had led to a positive outcome. Thanks were extended to all involved.

#### **6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT UC(24/25)03**

- 6.1. The Principal introduced her written report which included appended reports on the Your Voice employee engagement survey, student surveys and league table performance.
- 6.2. The challenging funding landscape and ongoing policy developments concerning the sector including the range of challenges facing the Scottish Funding Council were highlighted. Concerns about the future of research funding were also highlighted. Information on the background to the Scottish International Conference on Armed Forces in Society including University research activity taking place in that area was also provided.
- 6.3. Your Voice: Members noted the key points from the report on the 2024 'Your Voice' colleague engagement survey. In discussion the ongoing areas of focus and work being undertaken to address the survey findings were highlighted.
- 6.4. Student Surveys: Members noted the key points from the report.
- 6.5. League Table Performance: Members noted the key points from the report.
- 6.6. Court **noted** the report.

#### **7. FINANCIAL REPORT: PROVISIONAL OUTTURN FOR 2023/24\* UC(24/25)04**

- 7.1. Court received the paper which reported on the provisional financial outturn for the year ended 31 July 2024. It was noted that F&PC would be considering the affordability framework for Project VISION in the context of the outturn and current year financial performance.
- 7.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

**8. REVIEW OF CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION\* UC(24/25)05**

- 8.1. Court received the paper which reported on the financial position as at the end of August 2024. The range of mitigating actions being taken by the University to achieve its budget were highlighted. It was recognised that achieving the budget would be challenging due to the ongoing difficult financial environment.
- 8.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

**9. ENSA STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE UC(24/25)06**

- 9.1. The Edinburgh Napier Students' Association (ENSA) President and Co-President introduced the update on ENSA's current activities and progress against its Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024.
- 9.2. In discussion the recent activity undertaken by ENSA to secure new partnerships and sponsorships was outlined. It was noted that discussions were taking place with the University to ensure the policy of keeping Wednesday afternoons free of timetabled teaching activities continued to be observed. An update on University activity to develop and enhance sports facilities was also provided.
- 9.3. Court welcomed the positive progress outlined and **noted** the update.

**10. COLLEAGUE AND STUDENT WELLBEING REPORT UC(24/25)07**

- 10.1. Court received the paper which provided an update on the work undertaken to support student and colleague mental health and wellbeing in 2023/24 and which commented on current issues.
- 10.2. Members welcomed the comprehensive report provided. In discussion it was noted that the new case management system would enable a greater level of segmentation in the analysis of the support requirements of particular student groups which would enhance the activity undertaken to promote services in a targeted manner. It was also noted that an appropriate level of resourcing continued to be provided which enabled reasonable service levels to be sustained. The measures in place to ensure data security and Data Protection compliance for the sensitive personal data held on the case management system were outlined. The importance of creating spaces which would promote wellbeing was recognised and would be considered as part of Project VISION. The improved integration with NHS mental health services and improved data sharing (which had taken time) were noted.
- 10.3. Court **noted** the update and extended thanks to the Wellbeing and Inclusion team for the positive impact achieved through their work.

## **11. TRUSTED RESEARCH & INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UC(24/25)08**

11.1. Court received the paper which provided an overview of the issues surrounding Trusted Research and international security which was presented to Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) at its meeting on 20 September 2024.

11.2. Discussion followed during which the work underway to identify gaps and secure the requirements of the self-evaluation framework were highlighted, which would be monitored by ARC.

11.3. Court **noted** the update and the further oversight work which would take place under ARC.

## **Part B For information**

## **12. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 18 OCTOBER 2024 UC(24/25)09**

12.1. Court **noted** the minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board of 18 October 2024.

## **Part C Not intended for discussion**

## **13. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES**

### **13.a Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 20 September 2024\* UC(24/25)10**

13.1. The report was **noted**. The upcoming tender exercise for External Audit was highlighted.

### **13.b Finance & Property Committee on 3 October 2024\* UC(24/25)11**

13.2 The report was **noted**. The presentation on the activities of the Development Trust and ongoing review of its activities was highlighted.

## **14. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COURT BUSINESS 2024/25 UC(24/25)12**

14.1. Court **noted** the forward schedule.

## **15. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

15.1. The dates of future Court meetings and events were **noted**.

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