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UC(09/10)46
Item 2

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22nd March 2010
at 3.45 pm in the Castle Room, Craighouse Campus**

Present: Professor G.C. Borthwick (Chairman); Dr J. Boyle; Dr L. Burley; Ms K. Bylinska (NSA President); Lady Clark of Calton (Chancellor's Assessor); Mr O. Cruickshank; Mr W. Gallagher; Mr G. Kildare; Professor R. Mackenzie (Vice-Principal, Research & Knowledge Transfer); Mr G. McCarra; Mr B. Naylor; Dr J. Rees (Vice-Principal, Academic Quality & Customer Experience); Professor B. Sloan; Mrs A Smith; Dr P Stollard; Professor Dame J. Stringer (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Mr R Sweetman; Professor J. Watson

Apologies: Ms M. Ali; Professor A. Burns; Mr M. Connarty; Mr H. Hall; Ms M Stephenson (Vice-Chair);

In attendance: Ms R Pelik (Director of Academic Development)[Items 1&2 only]; Mrs M Cook (Director of Human Resources); Mr S Logie (Clerk to Court); Ms J Mackenzie (Acting Finance Director); Dr G Webber (University Secretary);

Observers: Ms C McCoy (Development Office)

1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the third Court meeting of the 2009/10 Academic Session.

2. PRESENTATION: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The Chairman invited the Director of Academic Development to give a presentation, which outlined the work of the Academic Development department and its role in ensuring academic excellence and teaching quality at Edinburgh Napier University. The Director highlighted the wide range of formal and informal interventions used to develop and support academic staff, share best practice and to ensure the university is at the forefront of developing and applying new, enhanced pedagogical approaches.

2.2 Responding to questions from members the Director confirmed that tailored interventions are often developed to meet specific local needs, informed by the University's Performance Development and Review process.

3. OPENING REMARKS & APOLOGIES

3.1 The Chairman welcomed Ms McCoy who was in attendance as an observer, and the Clerk noted the apologies. In his opening remarks the Chairman reflected upon the recent visit to Buckingham Palace by a number of staff and students to receive the highly prestigious Queens Anniversary Prize. The prizes are awarded bi-annually and Edinburgh Napier was the only Scottish

university to receive the award in this round. Congratulations were offered once again to all involved in this achievement.

- 3.2 It was noted that the University had recently been awarded the ROSPA Gold Award for Health & Safety for the seventh consecutive year, with congratulations being offered to all involved. The Chairman reflected positively upon a recent Court visit to the Sighthill Campus development, noting that the project remains on budget and on schedule.
- 3.3 Members were advised that the University has now commenced publishing the approved open minutes of Court meetings on the intranet, where they will be available to be viewed by staff, students and externally. It was noted this brings the University into closer line with CUC guidance and satisfies obligations under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Part A For discussion and decision

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12th DECEMBER 2009 UC(09/10)31

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2010 were **approved** as an accurate and fair record of the meeting.

4.a Matters Arising

- 4.2 No matters arising were raised.

5. PERFORMANCE UPDATES

5.a Review of the Current Financial Position UC(09/10)32

- 5.1 The Acting Finance Director introduced the paper which provided a report on the University's current financial position. It was reported that the year to date position was as anticipated and that the University remains on target to achieve its agreed year end position. The Executive continues to monitor the position closely and regularly, taking actions as appropriate to control costs.
- 5.2 There was a discussion regarding staff costs whereby it was noted that whilst costs remain broadly within benchmark, they are higher than is desirable or sustainable for the University. The recent Voluntary Severance Scheme had reduced costs but further measures may be required given the challenging economic and financial environment.
- 5.3 In response to a query regarding SFC claw-back of fees, the Principal outlined the difficulty the sector faces in managing intake populations during a period of unprecedented national demand. It was however outlined that the University has undertaken detailed modelling, set internal student targets, put in place enhanced controls and is monitoring the situation closely.
- 5.4 Thereafter, Court **noted** the review of the current financial position.

6. REVIEW OF THEMES ARISING FROM THE COURT/PEG RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE UC(09/10)33

- 6.1 The Principal introduced the paper which gave a brief review of the recent Court/PEG Residential Conference. The Principal noted that following the residential the Executive are taking forward a number of new initiatives,

aligned to delivering the University Strategy, such as: considering options for private investment; reviewing emerging legislation in India and its potential impact on establishing a physical presence there, as well as considering the possibilities in other international markets; and evaluating the options of developing the teaching of specific courses for international students in London. Furthermore it was noted that in light of public sector funding forecasts the University is continuing to undertake detailed reviews of the cost-effectiveness of activities.

- 6.2 In the discussion that followed a number of members commented favourably on the Conference and noted it had been successful in achieving its objectives, whilst also affirming the appropriateness of the direction in which the University is moving. Two minor points were raised that may enhance the conference organisation next year and these were noted.
- 6.3 Drawing on an observation made at the conference it was suggested that further investment may be required in order to enhance the University's website. It was noted that work to enhance the website is continually underway, and confirmed that this point would be considered further in the context of planning and budgeting.
- 6.4 Thereafter, Court **noted** the report on the residential conference.

7. HONORARY AWARDS

UC(09/10)34

- 7.1 The Principal introduced the paper which presented for Court's endorsement the nominations for Honorary Awards discussed and approved at the February 2010 meeting of the Academic Board. Members were reminded the nominations must be treated in the strictest confidence and the individuals identified must not be disclosed.
- 7.2 Court considered and **endorsed** the six recommendations for Honorary Awards.

Part B For information

8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

UC(09/10)35

- 8.1 The Principal introduced the paper which provided a report to Court on significant developments affecting the University that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda. The Principal highlighted that the extent of funding cuts for Universities in England is now becoming clear and that the annual funding letter from the SFC would be received by the University shortly. Whilst it is anticipated funding will be relatively protected for the forthcoming year, it was indicated future funding, from April 2011 onwards, would undoubtedly be more challenging.
- 8.2 The Principal reported that she would be visiting Hong Kong shortly to attend an additional graduation ceremony and to support fundraising activities. It was noted that she would also meet with partners for initial discussions regarding the opportunity of establishing a physical presence in Hong Kong, following recent changes in legislation that make this now possible. Also in relation to international developments, it was noted that an agreement has now been signed with the pathway college (NAVITAS) which will result in students commencing in January 2011.

- 8.3 It was noted that the Principal and University senior staff had met that morning with the senior management team from BBC Scotland to explore areas for future collaboration and partnership. It was also noted that partnership with the Scottish Drama Training Network is progressing well, with new funding having been confirmed by the SFC for a joint BA in Acting for Stage & Screen, a programme that has been developed with Queen Margaret University.
- 8.4 It was reported that the University Development Advisory Board has appointed a new Chairman, Dr Chris Van Der Kuyl, who is a leading expert in games technology. Thereafter, Court **noted** the Principal's Report.

**9. ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES FROM THE MEETING UC(09/10)36
HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2010**

- 9.1 The Principal introduced the minutes of the meeting of Academic Board held on 12th February 2010. Thereafter, Court **noted** the minutes..

10. SIGHTHILL PROJECT UPDATE UC(09/10)37

- 10.1 The University Secretary introduced the paper which updated Court on the activity that has taken place relating to the implementation of the Sighthill Project. It was noted that the project is progressing on programme and on budget and that although a lag of 1.5 weeks had been identified it did not affect the project's critical path. It was reported that all utilities have now been connected successfully, the cashflow of the project is well on track, and the project has secured an 'Excellent' BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) rating. Much of the focus of the project has now moved to planning for the relocation of staff to the new campus.
- 10.2 In discussion it was noted that the decision of Stevenson College not to proceed with the second phase of the proposed joint sports facility will have no detrimental impact upon Edinburgh Napier's students. It was further reported that discussions with the College regarding the so-called "1986 agreement", which established mutual rights and obligations at Sighthill, were reaching a satisfactory conclusion and should result in the termination of the existing agreement in favour of a number of specific legal commitments, supportive of the excellent relationship that is already in place.
- 10.3 Thereafter, Court **noted** the Sighthill Project update.

11. GOVERNANCE REVIEW 2009/10 UPDATE UC(09/10)38

- 11.1 In the unavoidable absence of the Convenor of the Governance Review Working Group, the University Secretary introduced the paper which provided members with an interim report on the Governance Review. It was highlighted that Stage 1 (an investigation of key issues) was now complete and the University was found to be in virtually full compliance with CUC guidance. A comparison of responses to an online survey had demonstrated that governance arrangements at Edinburgh Napier are aligned well with the rest of the UK sector, with no significant gaps being identified.

- 11.2 It was reported that a number of issues had been raised during the Review and these are now being considered in detail. A final report will be presented to the June meeting of Court. Thereafter, Court **noted** the interim report.

12. UPDATE ON THE VICE-PRINCIPAL APPOINTMENTS

- 12.1 The Principal provided Court with an update on the recruitment of a new Vice-Principal (Academic), noting Professor John Duffield would be commencing on 1st May 2010. The Principal also reported that recruitment for the Vice-Principal (Strategy & Resources) will be taken forward after Easter. Court **noted** the update on the recruitment of Vice-Principals

13. VALIDICTIONS

- 13.1 The Chairman gave a warm valediction for Mr Hall, who was leaving the University Court at the end of the March. In the valediction the Chairman noted the significant contribution made by Mr Hall since he first joined Court in 2001. The Chairman also gave a valediction for Mr Convery who had served as a co-opted member of the Audit Committee since November 2007.

Part C: Not Intended for discussion

14. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

- 14.1 The Court **noted** the reports from the following committees.
- 14.2 The Chairman reported that in keeping with the suggestion last October that Court might receive an interim report on Equality and Diversity matters, such a report has now been considered by both the Staff and Student Affairs Committees on behalf of the Court. It was noted that this is reported in the two Committee Reports and that this appears to be the most appropriate way of dealing with the matter, pending receipt of the next annual report by the Court as a whole in October 2010.

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| 14.a Finance & Commercialisation Committee held on 20th January 2010 | UC(09/10)39 |
| 14.b Health & Safety Committee held on 10th February 2010 | UC(09/10)40 |
| 14.c Estates Committee meeting held on 23rd February 2010 | UC(09/10)41 |
| 14.d Staff Affairs Committee held on 23rd February 2010 | UC(09/10)42 |
| 14.e Student Affairs Committee held on 2nd March 2010 | UC(09/10)43 |
| 14.f Finance & Commercialisation Committee held on 4th March 2010 | UC(09/10)44 |
| 14.g. Audit Committee held on 10th March | UC(09/10)45 |

15. DATES OF FUTURE COURT EVENTS

- 15.1 The dates of future Court events were **noted**.
The Court meeting closed at 5.30pm