

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY**

**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2010  
at 3.45 pm in the Castle Room, Craighouse Campus**

**Present:** Ms M. Ali; Professor G.C. Borthwick (Chairman); Dr J. Boyle; Professor A. Burns; Ms K. Bylinska; Professor J. Duffield (Vice-Principal, Academic); Mr W. Gallagher; Mr G. Kildare; Professor R. Mackenzie (Vice-Principal, Commercialisation); Mr G. McCarra; Mr R. Maclennan; Ms J. Paslawska; Dr J. Rees (Vice-Principal, Academic Quality & Customer Service); Professor B. Sloan; Mrs A. Smith; Ms M. Stephenson (Vice-Chair); Dr P. Stollard; Mr R. Sweetman; Mrs P. Woodburn

**Apologies:** Lady Clark of Calton (Chancellor's Assessor); Mr M. Connarty; Mr B. Naylor; Professor Dame J. Stringer (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Professor J. Watson

**In attendance:** Mrs M Cook (Director of Human Resources); Mr S Logie (Clerk to Court); Ms J Mackenzie (Finance Director); Dr G Webber (University Secretary)

**1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

1.1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2010/11 Academic Session.

**2. PRESENTATION: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**

2.1. The Vice-Principal (Academic Quality & Customer Service) gave a presentation regarding stakeholder engagement and relationship management, noting that it was addressing an issue raised during the recent Governance Review. In the presentation the Vice-Principal noted key stakeholder groups, outlined the University's framework for relationship management, and highlighted how information is managed and used effectively to support related activities.

2.2. Following the presentation members encouraged the University to consider carefully the value for money of each stakeholder engagement event, questioned whether stakeholder engagement would need to increase in the light of the Brown Review, and highlighted that whilst the term stakeholder may or may not be appropriate, students should remain at the centre of University activities.

**3. OPENING REMARKS AND WELCOME**

3.1. In his opening remarks the Chairman welcomed the Principal's return following a period of recuperation and noted the Court's thanks to Dr Easy who had been Acting Principal for four months. Three new members were welcomed to the

University Court: Mr R MacLennan and Mrs P. Woodburn as lay-members and Ms J. Paslawska as a NSA student sabbatical. It was reported that Ms Mackenzie has been appointed as Finance Director.

- 3.2. The Chairman reported that a member had queried in advance of the meeting if contingency arrangements are in place to cover absences by members of the Principal's Executive Group. It was advised that such matters are a delegated responsibility of the Executive, however members were also reassured that appropriate arrangements are indeed in place.
- 3.3. The Chairman highlighted that the Sighthill Campus had been handed over by Balfour Beattie Construction Limited (BBCL) on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October, noting that practical completion of the project was on time and on budget. The Chairman extended the Court's thanks for this achievement to the University Secretary, who had led the project, and to all involved, including those at BBCL. It was noted the autumn Court event would be held at Sighthill Campus.
- 3.4. The Chairman and Vice-Principal (Commercialisation) outlined a £905,000 project to establish a Business Innovation Exchange to support the growth of commercial income. The Clerk noted the apologies for the meeting.

## **Part A For discussion and decision**

### **4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2010 UC(09/10)67**

- 4.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2010 were **approved** as an accurate and fair record of the meeting.

### **5. MATTERS ARISING**

#### **5.a Update on the recruitment of a Vice-Principal**

- 5.1. The Chairman reported that it has been decided to put the appointment of a Vice-Principal (Strategy & Resources) on hold at this time, noting that it will be considered again over the coming months in discussion with the Principal.

#### **5.b. Remuneration Committee**

- 5.2. The Chairman noted that whilst the work of the Remuneration Committee is an item of Reserved Business, he wished to report to the full Court that the current internal and external environmental factors had been very much taken into account when the Committee met recently to discuss the remuneration of the five senior staff whose salaries are considered by the Committee.

## PERFORMANCE UPDATES

### **6. FINANCIAL REPORT: PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN FOR 2009/10 UC(10/11)01**

- 6.1. The Finance Director introduced the paper which presented for noting the primary statements for the draft accounts which have been submitted for audit. In her introductory remarks the Finance Director highlighted a number of key issues that had impacted upon the draft outturn, before noting that they were a good set of results that provide a good basis for the University going forward. It

was reported that the Finance and Commercialisation Committee will give further consideration to the 2009/10 financial outturn at its next meeting.

- 6.2. The Convenor of the Finance and Commercialisation Committee reiterated the view that the paper presented a very good set of results, noting that work will be undertaken to further enhance financial forecasting.
- 6.3. Following a brief discussion on a technical matter regarding the University's subsidiary companies, the Court **noted** the report.

## GOVERNANCE MATTERS

### **7. PROGRESS ON MANAGEMENT ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE UC(10/11)02 THE 2010/11 BUDGET**

- 7.1. The Vice-Principal (Academic) introduced the paper which provided Court with an overview of the actions undertaken by management to deliver the reductions in expenditure necessary to achieve the 2010/11 budget. In his introductory remarks the Vice-Principal highlighted: the principles underpinning the ongoing work; the commitment to maintain and enhance the student experience; the preferred option of reducing from 13 to six central professional services; and the ongoing consultations in the Business School, the School of Arts and Creative Industries, and with regards to Faculty senior management roles.
- 7.2. In the discussion that followed members enquired regarding the effect the actions were having on staff morale, reinforcing the importance of good communication to ensure staff are kept appropriately informed regarding the progress being made with the actions and cost savings. The complexity of the current external environment was highlighted and it was suggested staff should be kept informed regarding how management actions fit within the broader context. Thereafter Court was advised that a communications plan is being developed and that there have been a series of staff communications thus far.
- 7.3. Members questioned the scale of funding reductions that may be imposed by Government, noting the importance of planning based on a number of different scenarios. It was noted that funding cuts are likely to be imposed over a three to five year period, so planning must also consider the next actions that will be required to balance the University's costs and income. In response it was confirmed that the University is undertaking detailed forecasting and planning based on a range of scenarios, with current actions being informed by a reasonably conservative income forecast. It was also noted that the current actions are aimed at increasing efficiency and effectiveness to ensure the University is well placed to deal with further cuts in the future.
- 7.4. It was noted that whilst there is an understandable emphasis on reducing costs, careful consideration should also be given to capitalising on opportunities for income generation through best use of the University's assets and core skills. It was reported that considerable work is being undertaken to increase commercial income, in particular through the work of the nine Institutes for research and innovation. It was agreed a paper should be brought to a future Court meeting outlining opportunities for income generation.

7.5. The Chairman concluded the discussion by noting the importance of the issues being debated and thereafter the report was **noted**.

## **8. MEMBERSHIP OF COURT AND COURT COMMITTEES UC(10/11)03**

8.1. The Chairman introduced the paper which provided an update on the recruitment of new Court members, considered the issue of recruitment of a member from an under-represented community, reported the co-option of a member to the Audit Committee and recommended the membership of Court Committees for 2010/11. The new members were invited to introduce themselves to colleagues and were warmly welcomed to the Court.

8.2. Thereafter Court **noted** the report and **approved** the committee membership for 2010/11.

## **9. ANALYSIS OF UK LEAGUE TABLES UC(10/11)04**

9.1. The Vice-Principal (AQCS) introduced the paper which provided Court with a briefing regarding the University's overall performance in the four major league tables for 2010/11. It was noted that the paper also provided an analysis of the priority areas the University is addressing which could be expected to impact positively on the league table position. In her introductory remarks the Vice-Principal noted the seriousness with which the university regards the league tables, reassured members that they are carefully evaluated and analysed, and highlighted that the issues raised are all strategic imperatives for the University.

9.2. In the discussion that followed it was noted that the paper had been very helpful and that it had reinforced the importance of student retention. Members highlighted the importance of academic discipline specific league tables, cautioning that students and influencers may not place much weighting on the overall institutional rankings. It was questioned whether greater promotion could be undertaken for courses that perform particularly well, although it was also suggested there may be risk inherent in such a move.

9.3. It was suggested the University is making little progress and may be on a downward trend in league table position and that a strategy should be developed that articulates clearly where the University wishes to be in the league tables and the prioritised activities that will be taken to achieve this. It was noted care should be taken in focussing too strongly on league tables and suggested the University should target specific activities and focus on these, which would in turn influence league table position. Concern was expressed regarding the recent National Student Survey in which the University's position decreased slightly from an already relatively low position.

9.4. Thereafter, the Court **noted** the paper. The Vice-Principal (Academic) undertook to take the matters raised back to the Principal's Executive Group for further consideration and the Vice-Principal (AQCS) undertook to present a paper on the outcome of the National Student Survey to Court members at an appropriate future point and forum.

## Part B For information

### REPORTS AND UPDATES

#### 10. ANNUAL REPORT ON DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY UC(10/11)05

- 10.1. The Vice-Principal (AQCS) introduced the paper which provided Court with an annual report regarding the University's activities in respect of equality and diversity issues. It was highlighted that work is underway to develop and publish a combined Equality Scheme and that a set of high level indicators are also being developed.
- 10.2. In the discussion that followed a member questioned the appropriateness of making reference to a session on 'Recognising and Preventing Extremism on Campus' in the actions listed under Race Equality. The Chairman noted the matter and agreed that this would be followed-up outside of the meeting. Thereafter, the Court **noted** the report.

#### 11. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT UC(10/11)06

- 11.1. The Vice-Principal (Academic) introduced the paper which provided Court with an update on significant developments which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda. The Vice-Principal highlighted a number of matters including the considerable increase in applications for 2010/11, the activities of the Biofuels Research Centre in Hong Kong, the University's position in the People and Planet green league table and the achievement of the Investors in People Bronze status. The work of Universities UK and Universities Scotland in preparation for the outcome of the Brown Review was also outlined.
- 11.2. In the discussion that followed it was questioned if, given the costs of participation in the scheme, Investors in People status was worth pursuing, particularly in light of the current financial constraints. It was queried if the changes to the timing of the academic year had impacted negatively upon international student recruitment and if therefore, the matter was being reviewed. The successful redevelopment of the Sighthill Campus was highlighted and the Court's thanks were again conveyed to the University Secretary for having led the project to a successful conclusion. Thereafter, Court **noted** the Principal's Report.

#### 12. ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2010 UC(10/11)07

- 12.1. The Vice-Principal (ACQS) introduced the minutes of the meeting of Academic Board held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2010, highlighting the approval of the new Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy, the development of a Student Experience Statement, and the work to further enhance the student experience of Week 1 arrangements. Thereafter, Court **noted** the minutes.

**13. REVIEW OF ACADEMIC BOARD UC(10/11)08**

13.1. The Vice-Principal (Academic) introduced the paper which outlined the plans for an effectiveness review of Academic Board that will be undertaken in 2010/11. It was noted that the Review was a follow-up to the Governance Review, undertaken by the Court in 2009/10. It was highlighted that the review is timely as it will help to ensure the work regarding University structures and management roles are integrated appropriately with a review of Academic Board membership and Academic Board sub-committees. Thereafter, Court **noted** the paper.

**14. PREPARATIONS FOR ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW UC(10/11)09**

14.1. The Vice-Principal (Academic) introduced the paper which provided Court with an update on the University's preparations for Enhancement-led Institutional Review. (ELIR), noting the importance of the Quality Assurance Agency reporting confidence in the University's academic standards and its' students learning experience. Thereafter, Court **noted** the paper and asked to be kept informed regarding the status of the risks regarding potential staff changes.

**Part C Not intended for discussion**

**15. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES**

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

**15.a Nominations Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2010 UC(10/11)10**

**15.b Audit Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010 UC(10/11)11**

**15.c Finance & Commercialisation Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010 UC(10/11)12**

**16. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COURT BUSINESS UC(10/11)13**

16.1. The Chairman introduced the paper which presented the forward schedule of Court business for 2010/11. Court **noted** the paper.

**17. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

17.1. The dates of future Court meetings and events were **noted**. The Chairman invited members to submit suggestions for topics for the Court/PEG conference in February 2011 to the University Secretary.

**Part D: Reserved Business**

**18. Report from the Remuneration Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> October**

18.1. All officers in attendance and members of Court, other than lay-members, withdrew from the meeting to allow reserved business to be conducted.