

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY**  
**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010  
at 3.45 pm in the Castle Room, Craighouse Campus**

**Present:** Ms M. Ali; Professor G.C. Borthwick (Chairman); Dr J. Boyle; Ms K. Bylinska; Lady Clark of Calton (Chancellor's Assessor); Mr M. Connarty; Professor J. Duffield (Vice-Principal, Academic); Mr W. Gallagher; Mr G. Kildare; Professor R. Mackenzie (Vice-Principal, Commercialisation); Mr G. McCarra; Mr R. Maclennan; Dr J. Rees (Vice-Principal, Academic Quality & Customer Service); Professor B. Sloan; Mrs A. Smith; Professor Dame J. Stringer (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Ms M. Stephenson (Vice-Chair); Dr P. Stollard; Mrs P. Woodburn.

**Apologies:** Professor A. Burns; Mr B. Naylor; Ms J. Paslawska; Mr R. Sweetman; Professor J. Watson;

**In attendance:** Mrs M Cook (Director of Human Resources); Mr D Cloy (Acting Clerk); Ms J Mackenzie (Finance Director); Dr G Webber (University Secretary)

**1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

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

**2. PRESENTATION: CURRENT & FUTURE HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR**

2.1. The Director of Human Resources gave a presentation on significant current and future employee relations issues within the Higher Education Sector. The presentation highlighted the current and forthcoming sectoral negotiations on pay awards, challenges to the future funding of pensions, questions over the continued viability of national negotiations through JNCHES in the context of divergence in funding policy North and South of the Border and the risk of future industrial action.

2.2. Discussion followed during which the mechanisms by which the University engaged locally with its staff on Human Resource issues were noted.

2.3. Thereafter, Court noted the presentation.

**3. OPENING REMARKS AND WELCOME**

3.1. In his opening remarks the Chairman reflected upon the successful Court social event at the newly opened Sighthill campus and noted the success of the October graduation ceremonies and the high quality of honorary graduates who had joined the Edinburgh Napier family: Vin Murria; Jack Perry; Rowena Arshad; and Mike McDonagh.

3.2. The apologies were noted.

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

### **4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2010 UC(10/11)14**

4.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2010 were **approved** as an accurate and fair record of the meeting.

### **5. MATTERS ARISING**

5.1. The Chairman reported that the matter raised in minute 10.2 concerning the Diversity & Equality annual report had been followed up and would be reflected in the next annual report.

### **6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT UC(10/11)22**

6.1. The Chairman invited the Principal to present the Principal's Report at this point on the agenda, noting that it contained helpful information that would help place other agenda items into an appropriate context.

6.2. The Principal highlighted the Scottish Government's draft budget and letter of guidance to the Scottish Funding Council which set out the financial implications for the Scottish HE sector and indicated funding priorities going forward.

6.3. The Principal highlighted the Scottish Government's Green Paper on the future direction and funding of higher education in Scotland, 'Building a Smarter Future', which set out a range of options for the future of Scotland's universities, including funding solutions which would maintain the tradition of the state being the primary provider whilst maximising income to higher education by other means.

6.4. The Principal also reported that the Scottish Funding Council had just announced its indicative main grants to universities and colleges for 2011-12, based on the HE and FE budgets in the Scottish Government's draft budget. This announced a reduction of 8.1% across the sector as a whole, with an overall cut for Edinburgh Napier of 7.9% against the previous years' allocation. It was noted that the University's planning, which had been based on an anticipated 7.6% reduction, was therefore well founded on appropriate assumptions. The Principal acknowledged the challenging situation going forward, but emphasised the considerable savings which the University had achieved, the continuing efforts to achieve savings and stressed the importance of the University's ability to continue to invest in key strategic areas which would deliver future income, growth and sustainability.

6.5. Discussion followed during which the importance of effective engagement with the consultation and debate surrounding the Green Paper was emphasised, and the activities and forums through which the University's views would be channelled were noted.

- 6.6. In response to a members' question, the University's successful management of the operational difficulties arising from the recent spell of adverse weather, including the re-scheduling of examinations, was noted.
- 6.7. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

## PERFORMANCE UPDATES

### 7. **APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2009/10** UC(10/11)15

- 7.1. The Finance Director introduced the paper which was presented to enable the Court to discharge its statutory responsibilities in respect of the Financial Statements for 2009/10. It was noted that the statements had previously been approved by the Finance & Commercialisation Committee and the Audit Committee. In her opening remarks the Finance Director highlighted the surplus of £4.99m as compared to the surplus of £1.57m last year, and the strong year end cash position. It was noted that this outcome would allow further prioritised investment in key strategic areas to more quickly enable growth of alternative income streams.
- 7.2. Discussion followed during which Court welcomed the results, and the solid base from which the University could invest in its future growth and development.
- 7.3. Thereafter the Court: **approved** the report and financial statements for 2009/10; **authorised** the Chair of Court, the Principal and the Finance Director to sign the financial statements on its behalf; and **authorised** the Chair of Court, the Principal and Finance Director to sign the letter or representation.

### 8. **REVIEW OF CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION** UC(10/11)16

- 8.1. The Finance Director introduced the paper which gave Court an update on the University's financial position to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2010. It was noted that variances against budget were mainly due to timing issues and that the results overall gave no cause for concern.
- 8.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

### 9. **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS** UC(10/11)17

- 9.1. The Principal introduced the paper which presented for Court's information the revised Key Performance Indicators that would be used to monitor the progress towards the University Strategy 2015. The Principal highlighted growth in applications, research and commercial income and in international activities whilst recognising further work that was needed to improve student retention rates and to consider certain areas concerning staff satisfaction.
- 9.2. Discussion followed during which measures being developed by the University to address student retention issues were outlined, with the importance of early engagement emphasised. Activities underway to address issues arising from student satisfaction surveys, including the "feedback for learning" initiative in

respect of issues raised concerning assessment feedback, were highlighted. Activities of the Napier Student's association in support of this area were also highlighted. It was noted that Court, through Academic Board, would continue to be informed of progress in addressing issues of student satisfaction.

9.3. Thereafter Court **noted** the report

## **10. STUDENT ENROLMENTS REPORT**

**UC(10/11)18**

10.1. The Vice Principal (Academic Quality & Customer Service) introduced the paper which presented the enrolled student population for the current academic year (as at 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010) and provided a forecast for the year end position, noting that the University was on course to either meet or exceed targets for most segments of the student population. It was noted that the University expected to exceed the SFC Consolidation Limit for undergraduate full time home and EU students by around 145 students, with the potential for a financial penalty. It was also highlighted that the full-time undergraduate overseas student population (on campus) was forecast to slightly exceed target and that the full time taught post graduate overseas population was performing well against forecast. Targets for student population on programmes delivered overseas were also expected to be met.

10.2. Discussion followed, during which measures being taken to prevent over-recruitment in respect of SFC funded places in future were outlined.

10.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

## GOVERNANCE MATTERS

## **11. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

**UC(10/11)19**

11.1. The Convenor of the Audit Committee, Mr Gallagher, introduced the annual report from the Audit Committee. It was noted that the Committee believed that the University was operating adequate and effective control systems.

11.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

## **12. HONORARY AWARDS REVISED REGULATIONS**

**UC(10/11)20**

12.1. The Principal introduced the paper which sought Court's approval for revised regulations and procedures for the granting on Honorary Degrees and Fellowships, as considered and approved recently at the Academic Board.

12.2. Court **approved** the revised regulations.

## **13. HONORARY AWARDS\***

**UC(10/11)21**

[Clerk's note: This paper was tabled and collected from members following the meeting]

13.1. The Principal introduced the paper which sought Court's ratification of the names put forward at the last meeting of the Honorary Awards Committee and as approved by the Academic Board. Members were reminded that names

must remain confidential until such time as the persons have been approached and accepted their invitation.

13.2. Court **endorsed** the proposed Honorary Awards.

#### **14. Part B For information**

##### REPORTS AND UPDATES

#### **15. ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010 UC(10/11)23**

15.1. The Principal introduced the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on 24<sup>th</sup> September. Court **noted** the minutes.

#### **16. SIGHTHILL CAMPUS UPDATE UC(10/11)24**

16.1. The University Secretary introduced the paper which provided Court with an update on the activity that has been taken in relation to the implementation of the Sighthill Project.

16.2. Court **noted** the update.

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

#### **17. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES**

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

- a) Health and Safety Committee meeting on 13 October 2010 **UC(10/11)25**
- b) Estates Committee meeting on 19 October 2010 **UC(10/11)26**
- c) Finance and Commercialisation Committee meeting on 6 December 2010 **UC(10/11)27**

17.2 It was noted that the scheduled meetings of the Students' Association Committee on 30 November 2010, Audit Committee on 6 December 2010 and Human Resources Committee on 7 December 2010 had been postponed due to adverse weather. The re-scheduled Audit Committee had met immediately ahead of this meeting of Court.

#### **18. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

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

Court Meetings  
21<sup>st</sup> March 2011  
27<sup>th</sup> June 2011

Court/PEG residential  
28<sup>th</sup> February 2011

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