

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21 March 2011
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); Professor J. Duffield (Vice-Principal, Academic); Mr R Kemmer; Professor R. Mackenzie (Vice-Principal, Commercialisation); Mr G. McCarra; Ms J. Paslawska; Dr J. Rees (Vice-Principal, Academic Quality & Customer Service); Mrs A. Smith; Professor Dame J. Stringer (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Ms M. Stephenson (Vice-Chair); Mr R. Sweetman; Mrs P. Woodburn.

Apologies: Professor A. Burns; Mr M. Connarty; Mr W. Gallagher; Mr G. Kildare; Mr R. Maclennan; Mr B. Naylor; Dr P. Stollard; Professor J. Watson.

In attendance: Mr D Cloy (Clerk); Mrs M Cook (Director of Human Resources); Ms J Mackenzie (Finance Director); Dr G Webber (University Secretary); Mr J Worden (Dean of International Strategy & Operations)(item 2).

Observer: E Barry

1. WELCOME

- 1.1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the 2010/11 Academic Session.
- 1.2. The Chairman welcomed Rob Kemmer to his first meeting of Court as the new member appointed by the Academic Board, replacing Professor Brian Sloan who had not been re-elected to the Academic Board, and was therefore no longer in Court membership. The Chairman extended thanks to Professor Sloan for his contribution to the work of Court since his appointment in August 2009.
- 1.3. The Chairman also welcomed staff member Eithne Barry (Learning Information Services) who was attending Court as an observer as part of her professional development.

2. PRESENTATION: UPDATE ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND A PATHWAY COLLEGE

- 2.1. The Dean of International Strategy & Operations gave a presentation which outlined the University's current international activities, the risks and challenges surrounding these and the key developmental activities currently underway to support the University's strategic objective to be an international university. Details were also given on progress regarding the establishment of the Edinburgh International College pathway college which was intended to

increase overseas recruitment to the University's Edinburgh based programmes.

- 2.2. Discussion followed during which Court broadly welcomed the initiatives outlined, subject to re-assurances that due consideration would be given to identifying and managing associated risks, and to the appropriate prioritisation of resources in pursuit of these initiatives.
- 2.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the presentation.

3. OPENING REMARKS AND APOLOGIES

- 3.1. The apologies were **noted**.

Part A Items for Discussion

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 DECEMBER 2010 UC(10/11)28

- 4.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2010 were **approved** as an accurate and fair record of the meeting, subject to a minor typographical amendment.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- 5.1. No matters arising were identified.

6. REVIEW OF CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION UC(10/11)29

- 6.1. The Director of Finance introduced the paper which presented Court with an overview of the University's financial position at 31 December 2010. It was noted that there were some variances against budget which were mainly due to timing issues, and that overall the results to 31 December gave no cause for concern. It was further reported that the University had not been subject to the anticipated in-year financial penalty for over-recruitment, and that it was believed that budget targets were likely to be met or exceeded.
- 6.2. In response to a member's question as to whether a more favourable financial position should prompt a re-visiting of the University's current approach to achieving staff cost savings, it was noted that the University had been fully engaged in consultation with recognised trades unions and potentially affected staff through the Avoidance of Redundancy Committee. Whilst it was regrettable that the University still anticipated the need for compulsory redundancies, the close focus on alternative means of reducing costs and the use of redeployment had meant that these were likely to number less than 40 rather than up to 100 as anticipated at the outset. It was noted that there remained the need for the University to meet its targets for income and expenditure, and to secure the resources required to invest in strategic areas of activity which would help ensure a strong and sustainable future for the University.
- 6.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

7. REPORT OF THE COURT/PEG STRATEGY CONFERENCE UC(10/11)30

- 7.1. The Chairman introduced the paper which summarised the proceedings and outcomes of the Court/PEG 2011 Strategy Conference, held on 28 February at the University's Craighouse Campus.
- 7.2. Discussion followed during which Court reflected that the event had achieved its objectives and had been very useful in providing members with the opportunity to review and engage with key areas of the University's strategy. It was noted that the input provided by members at this conference would be taken forward within the University to inform the future development and prioritisation of these strategic areas. It was further noted that Court would have the opportunity to review progress against the University's strategic objectives when it received the annual update on the Corporate Plan at its next meeting.
- 7.3. Thereafter the Court **noted** the report.

8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT UC(10/11)31

- 8.1. The Principal introduced her written report, highlighting the joint report by Universities Scotland and the Scottish Government which had indicated an annual teaching funding gap of around £202m facing Scottish universities by 2014/15. Education Secretary Michael Russell, in his statement to the Scottish Parliament, had presented a revised figure based on a number of assumptions to suggest that the funding gap stood at around £93m. The Scottish Government had, however, given a firm commitment to fill any funding gap to ensure that Scotland's universities maintained their competitiveness. It was noted that many issues and questions remained to be answered following the Scottish Government's announcement which would not be resolved until after the election in May.
- 8.2. It was also reported that the letter confirming the University's 2011/12 grant from the Scottish Funding Council had been received which confirmed the indicative figures received in December 2010, with the University better off by £250k due to the decision not to impose the financial penalty for over-recruitment.
- 8.3. The UK Border Agency's current consultation on proposed changes to the immigration system, which had the potential to adversely affect international student recruitment, was noted.
- 8.4. The University's continued strong growth in applications for undergraduate places was noted, with a 28.1% increase against the UK average of 2.8%.
- 8.5. Court was informed that the University had received very positive informal feedback in relation to its Enhancement Led Institutional Review meetings, and expected to shortly receive a formal letter from the QAA confirming this outcome.
- 8.6. Court was advised that the University was assisting students from Libya who were experiencing difficulties in relation to funding, following the freezing of the Libyan government's assets.

- 8.7. It was reported that the University's National Biofuel Resource Centre had been awarded £582k from the European Regional Development Fund for renewable energy and low carbon economy projects.
- 8.8. It was reported that the sale of the University's Craighouse Campus had been successfully completed.
- 8.9. An update on international developments in relation to Hong Kong was provided, during which the highly positive reputation of the University in the territory was noted. Following discussion surrounding potential opportunities to grow the University's presence in the territory as part of its wider strategy to deliver more international higher education in overseas locations, Court was re-assured that it would be engaged at an appropriate stage should the matter progress.
- 8.10. The Chairman and Principal updated Court on the highly constructive SFC Strategic Dialogue meeting which had taken place that morning. Discussion had focussed around internationalisation, developing income streams, student support and the University's approach to governance, all of which received encouraging and positive feedback.
- 8.11. The University Secretary reported that the University's Sighthill Campus had been shortlisted for a RIBA award.
- 8.12. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

Part B Items for Information

9. RESPONSE TO FUNDING GREEN PAPER UC(10/11)32

- 9.1. Court **noted** the University's response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Green paper on the future of higher education.

10. ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES FROM 4 MARCH 2011 UC(10/11)33

- 10.1. Court **noted** the minutes of the meeting of Academic Board held on 4 March 2011.

11. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES

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

- a) Health and Safety Committee meeting on 2 February 2011 **UC(10/11)34**
- b) Audit Committee meeting on 9 February 2011 **UC(10/11)35**
- c) Estates Committee meeting on 10 February 2011 **UC(10/11)36**

- d) Finance and Commercialisation Committee meeting on 17 February 2011 **UC(10/11)37**
- e) Students' Association Committee meeting on 22 February 2011 **UC(10/11)38**

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

Court Meetings
27th June 2011