

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10th October 2011
at 3.45 pm in the Castle Room, Craighouse Campus**

Present: Professor G.C. Borthwick (Chairman); Professor Dame J.K. Stringer (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Dr J. Boyle; Mr M. Connarty; Lady Clark of Calton (Chancellor's Assessor); Professor J. Duffield (Vice-Principal, Strategy, Resources & External Relations); Ms K. Dudgeon; Mr R. Hare; Mr R. Kemmer; Mr G. Kildare; Mr S. Logie; Professor R. Mackenzie (Vice-Principal, Commercialisation); Mr G. McCarra; Mr R. Maclennan; Mr B. Rigby; Dr P. Stollard; Mrs P. Woodburn; Mr T. Zanelli

Apologies: Ms M. Ali; Professor A. Burns; Mr W. Gallagher; Ms M. Stephenson (Vice-Chair); Mr R. Sweetman;

In attendance: Mrs M Cook (Director of Human Resources); Mr D Cloy (Clerk to Court); Ms J Mackenzie (Director of Finance, Planning & Commercial Services); Dr G Webber (University Secretary)

1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

- 1.1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2011/12 Academic Session.
- 1.2. The Chairman welcomed Tom Zanelli (NSA President) to his first Court meeting in his new role, and welcomed Katie Dudgeon (NSA Treasurer & Student Activities Officer).
- 1.3. The Chairman also welcomed new lay Court members Robert Hare and Bruce Rigby to their first meeting following their appointment to Court over the summer. Steven Logie was also welcomed to his first meeting as the elected non-academic staff Court member.
- 1.4. The apologies were noted.

2. PRESENTATION: LEADING EDGE RESEARCH

- 2.1. Professor Martin Tangney (Director, Biofuel Research Centre) gave a presentation on the leading edge research conducted by the University's Biofuel Research Centre, outlining its growth and achievements since its establishment in 2007 and looking ahead to its plans for future development. The significant media attention generated by the Centre's development of biofuel from by products of the whisky distillation process in 2010 was highlighted, and the positive impact of this on the University's profile and reputation was noted.
- 2.2. Following discussion, Court welcomed the presentation.

Part A For discussion and decision

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27TH JUNE 2011 UC(11/12)01

3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2011 were **approved**.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1. No matters arising were identified.

5. COURT AND COURT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

(i) Court Recruitment and Committee Membership UC(11/12)02

5.1. The Chairman introduced the paper which provided Court with an update on issues related to the membership of Court and Court committees, highlighting the appointment of two new lay members, Robert Hare and Bruce Rigby, to Court membership for initial four year terms from 1 October 2011 to 31 July 2015. The Chairman also reported that Mike Connarty had been appointed for a second term, from August 2012 to July 2016.

5.2. The Chairman noted that difficulty remained in addressing the gender balance and ethnic diversity representation in Court's membership and that Nominations Committee had agreed that a further attempt should be made to fill the remaining lay member vacancy this session, through identifying and encouraging applications from candidates whose appointment would help improve the gender balance and/or ethnic diversity in Court's membership. Court members were asked to consider this matter and to provide the Chairman with suggestions for suitable candidates for consideration.

5.3. Thereafter Court **noted** the outcome of the summer recruitment exercise, its current membership and **approved** its committee convenorship and membership for 2011/12.

(ii) Court Chair Appointment Update UC(11/12)03

5.4. The University Secretary introduced the paper which provided an update on progress to date with the process for the appointment of a new Chair of Court, as approved by Court at its last meeting. It was noted that the appointment committee had been established and had met to consider the process, timelines and work to be undertaken. It was anticipated that advertisement would take place by mid November 2011, interviews by February 2012 and a potential appointment by March 2012. It was noted that Court would receive a further update on progress at its December 2011 meeting.

5.5. Thereafter Court **noted** the update.

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT UC(11/12)04

6.1. The Chairman congratulated the Principal on her recent success in being named as Public Sector Leader of the Year at the 2011 Scottish Leadership Awards.

- 6.2. The Principal introduced her written report to Court, and highlighted the overview of the University's performance and achievement over the past year. It was noted that despite the difficult economic climate, the University had performed extremely well, with its steady progress in league tables, significant increase in applications, good performance in the Enhancement Led Institutional Review and continued expansion and development of overseas provision highlighted in particular. It was noted that the budget had been well managed and had returned an operating surplus which would allow investments in key areas to ensure future growth and sustainability. It was also noted that, although research income had declined slightly, income from commercial activities had increased substantially, as had the surplus generated by those activities. Tribute was also paid to the staff of the University whose efforts had secured this positive outcome, whilst acknowledging that this had been achieved against the difficult backdrop of re-structuring, which had been well handled by all involved. It was noted that the University was able to face the future with greater stability, with no further staff reductions anticipated and the ability to invest.
- 6.3. Recent developments in higher education policy were outlined, with the publication of the Scottish Government's pre-legislative paper on post-16 education highlighted. The Scottish Government's commitment to bridge the funding gap and the relatively favourable outcome of the Scottish Spending Review and Draft Scottish Budget, which confirmed priority for higher education funding, were also highlighted. It was noted, however, that this relatively favourable treatment of the sector would be linked to the delivery of a number of the ambitions set out in the pre-legislative paper around efficiencies and regional collaborations and that new powers and duties were proposed which would give the Ministers and the Funding Council a greater role in directing change. It was noted that the University would respond to the consultation on the pre-legislative paper by the December 2011 deadline.
- 6.4. The University's indicative decision on setting fees for rest-of-UK students was highlighted. It was noted that this was considered a relatively straightforward, fair and non-contentious approach which would cover the University's costs whilst allowing leeway to offer bursaries aimed at maintaining the University's widening access mission.
- 6.5. Recent activities in support of the University's international development objectives were highlighted, including meetings with organisations and government departments in Hong Kong, India and Singapore and the recent successful visit by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Administrative Region to the Biofuel Research Centre at the University's Sighthill Campus. The importance of continuing to encourage home students to study overseas was also emphasised.
- 6.6. It was reported that the post of Vice Principal (Academic) had been advertised and that interviews were scheduled for the following day. The outcome would be reported to Court in due course.

6.7. Discussion followed during which efforts underway to address areas for improvement identified through student satisfaction surveys, and the University's engagement and dialogue with FE colleges were noted.

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

7. FINANCIAL REPORT: PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN FOR 2010/11 **UC(11/12)05**

7.1. The Director of Finance, Planning & Commercial Services introduced the paper which presented the primary statements from the draft accounts which had been submitted for audit. It was noted that the actual draft outturn for 2010/11 of £4.7m was broadly in line with the Quarter 3 forecast presented to Court in June 2011 taking account of the issues which were uncertain at that time, but which were anticipated to have an impact on the overall results. A number of such key issues that had now crystallised and had impacted favourably upon the draft outturn were highlighted, and it was noted that this represented a good set of results that would provide a good basis for the University going forward. It was further noted that discussions with professional advisors would take place shortly regarding the provision for dilapidations, which may result in this being revised favourably.

7.2. In response to a member's question, it was noted that a communications plan for staff regarding the outturn was being discussed.

7.3. Following a brief discussion on a technical matter regarding a subsidiary company, Court **noted** the report.

8. KEY RISKS MONITORING STATEMENT **UC(11/12)06***

8.1. The University Secretary introduced the paper which provided Court with an assessment of confidence in the management of the University's top risks for academic year 2011/12. It was noted that, as agreed at Court in June 2011, the complete monitoring schedule would also be received by Court for information from this cycle onwards.

8.2. A number of significant risks were highlighted, with the factors surrounding them, and actions underway and planned to mitigate them, explained.

8.3. Discussion followed during which it was agreed that Court would receive an update report on the Research Institutes for discussion at a meeting later in the session. Activities underway to prepare the University for the upcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise were also highlighted.

8.4. Thereafter Court **noted** the summary report on the management of the University's top risks.

9. HONORARY AWARDS **UC(11/12)07***

9.1. Court **approved** all but one of the proposals for Honorary Awards, as recommended by the Honorary Awards Committee and approved by Academic Board.

Part B For information

10. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

10.1. The Principal highlighted the main areas of discussion from this meeting; changes to the taught postgraduate academic year, and the University's performance in the 2011 National Student Survey. It was noted that the minutes of this meeting would be circulated to members when available.

11. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE: UNIVERSITY RESPONSE UC(11/12)09

11.1. Court **noted** the response submitted by the University to the Scottish Government's review of University Governance.

Part C Not intended for discussion

12. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES

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

12.a **Audit Committee held on 21 September 2011 UC(11/12)10**

12.b **Finance & Commercialisation Committee held on 29 September 2011 UC(11/12)12**

12.c **Nominations Committee on 27 September 2011 UC(11/12)13***

12.2 It was noted that the report of the Estates Committee meeting held on 4 October 2011 would be circulated when available.

13. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COURT BUSINESS UC(11/12)14

13.1. Court **noted** its forward schedule of for 2011/12.

14. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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

Part D: Reserved Business

15. Report from the Remuneration Committee held on 26th September 2011

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

15.2. The report from the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 26 September 2011 was **noted**.

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