

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 31 March 2014
at 3.45 pm in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

Present: Dr G. Forbes (Chairman); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Mr N. Ballantyne; Ms J. Boyle; Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor); Mr R. Hare; Mr R. Kemmer; Dr S. Jiwa; Mr S. Logie; Mr R. Maclennan; Mr R Malcolm; Mr B. Rigby; Professor A. Sambell (Vice Principal, Academic); Mr D Smith; Dr P. Stollard; Mr R. Sweetman.

Apologies: Ms M. Ali; Mr M. Connarty; Professor J. Duffield (Vice-Principal, Internationalisation); Dr V. Ellis; Mr W. Gallagher; Mrs P. Woodburn.

In attendance: Mr D Cloy (Clerk to Court); Mrs M Cook (Director of Human Resources); Mr A Jefferson (Interim Director of Finance); Dr G Webber (University Secretary).

1. OPENING REMARKS, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1. The Chair welcomed members and welcomed Mr Andrew Jefferson (Interim Director of Finance) to his first Court meeting.

1.2. The apologies were noted.

Part A For discussion and decision

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2013 UC(13/14)40

2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2013 were **approved**.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1. No matters arising were identified.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

UC(13/14)41

4.1. The Principal introduced her written report to Court, and briefly highlighted some of the main headings. In relation to the ongoing industrial action it was noted that contingency planning was underway in order to mitigate the effects of any such action on the University's operations. In relation to the Horizon 2020 European Union research budget, the opportunities for the University were noted and work underway to enhance the University's research infrastructure and shape the future support for its Research, Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise activity was highlighted.

- 4.2. The Principal's recent visit to China and Hong Kong was highlighted, and a number of productive discussions which had taken place with partners and supporters with a view to the development of future projects which would help grow the University's research reputation were outlined. It was also noted that over a thousand students had become new Edinburgh Napier University Graduates in Hong Kong at the recent graduation ceremony.
- 4.3. The Principal also highlighted a recent meeting which had taken place with the Scottish Funding Council regarding the University's Outcome Agreement which had proved challenging.
- 4.4. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

5. REVIEW OF CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION UC(13/14)42*

- 5.1. The Interim Finance Director introduced the paper which gave Court an update on the University's financial position to 31st January 2014. It was noted that the University was forecast to slightly exceed the budgeted surplus whilst the key factors which had contributed to variations against budget were highlighted and explained. The reduction in income from research and commercial activity was noted as an area of particular concern and the need to drive activity and grow income in this area was recognised.
- 5.2. Discussion followed during which it was noted that a robust strategic investment plan would be presented to Court in June. It was also noted that the increase in staff costs as a percentage of turnover was a consequence of the reduction in income.
- 5.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

6. NEW UNIVERSITY STRATEGY UC(13/14)43

- 6.1. The Principal introduced the paper which invited Court to consider and approve a new University Strategy for 2014-2020 which had been developed through extensive consultation, and had been modified to take account of feedback from the Court/ULT strategy day in February 2014. It was noted that investment priorities to support the strategy were being developed and that work was underway to develop Key Performance Indicators to enable Court to monitor progress and achievement against the new Strategy, which would be brought to Court in June. It was also noted that work was underway to develop a new suite of supporting strategies and plans.
- 6.2. Discussion followed during which Court warmly welcomed the strategy and the meaningful consultation through which it had been developed which had secured the buy-in and support of staff and students. The question of the potential effect of any change in Scotland's constitutional future was raised, but it was noted that any effect on research income would be limited as the University did not currently derive much income from UK funders. It was emphasised that efforts would be required to ensure that supporting strategies and the investments needed to enable their delivery were properly integrated

and it was noted that the budget for 2014/15 would incorporate the strategic investments required. Two minor drafting amendments were suggested by members which were accepted and would be reflected in the final published version.

6.3. Thereafter, Court **approved** the University Strategy for 2014-2020.

7. COURT EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW UPDATE UC(13/14)44

7.1. Dr Stollard introduced the paper which provided Court with an update on the progress of the review of Court effectiveness following the second meeting of the Court Effectiveness Review Working Group on 24 February 2014 which had considered the questionnaire and discussion group inputs from members. The key issues considered and outcomes to date were highlighted and it was noted that the Group would consider questions around sub-committee structure further at its next meeting, after which proposals would be brought to Court in June.

7.2. Discussion followed during which the potential role of ad-hoc sub-groups in monitoring specific strategy areas was highlighted, as were the potential implications for the requirements on lay members if the number of sub-committees were to be significantly reduced. The status of the Student Experience Committee was raised, and it was noted that this would be considered by the Group.

7.3. Thereafter Court **noted** the report.

8. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHANCELLOR UC(13/14)45

8.1. The Chair of Court introduced the paper which invited Court to extend the appointment of Tim Waterstone as Chancellor for a further year and proposed a process for taking forward the appointment of a new Chancellor.

8.2. A member requested that, when establishing the Group charged with taking forward the appointment process, the overall balance of Court's membership be taken into account. This was noted.

8.3. Thereafter Court;

(i) **Approved** the extension of the appointment of Tim Waterstone as Chancellor of the University by one further year to 31 July 2015.

(ii) **Granted delegated authority** to the Chair of Court to establish a small group under his leadership to manage the recruitment process and appoint a new Chancellor, subject to regular report.

(iii) **Agreed** that a paper should be presented to Court in June 2014 proposing criteria for selection.

Part B For information

9. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 7 MARCH 2014 UC(13/14)46

- 9.1. Court **noted** the minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board of 7 March 2014.
- 9.2. Progress with the integration of Research Institutes into Academic Schools was highlighted, as was the decision to free up Wednesday afternoons where possible within existing timetabling parameters, for student led activities for the 2014/15 academic year, in response to student feedback.

10. OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2014/15 UC(13/14)47

- 10.1. Court **noted** the final submitted version of the University's 2014/15 Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council.
- 10.2. It was noted that the appendix containing trend and projection data had been updated to correct inaccurate data and that the updated table would be circulated to Court members.

11. RUK STUDENT BURSARIES: UPDATE* UC(13/14)48

- 11.1. Court **noted** the update on the Scholarship packages that the University intends to offer to new entrants within the Rest of UK (RUK) tuition fee category from 2015 entry onwards.

12. KEY RISKS MONITORING SCHEDULE* UC(13/14)49

- 12.1. Court **noted** the paper which provided the second assessment of confidence in the management of the University's top risks for academic year 2013/14.
- 12.2. In response to a member's query it was noted that there had been no change in risk status since the last report, although the narrative relating to certain risks had changed. A number of drafting points were noted by a member for correction in future versions. The process for producing the new risk register, which would begin in April, was outlined. The issue of league table performance was raised and the range of activities which had taken place and were currently underway which were expected to improve the position were outlined.

Part C Not intended for discussion

13. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES

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

13.a Estates Committee meeting on 16 December 2013 UC(13/14)50

In response to a query by the Chancellor's Assessor regarding the University's strategy for student accommodation the Convenor of Estates Committee outlined the strategy which the University had pursued to date. The University Secretary undertook to provide further information on this matter to the Assessor.

An update was provided on the proposal to purchase a building for the development of a Sustainable Construction Education and Research Facility, which had been previously approved by Estates Committee and Finance & Commercialisation Committee. It was noted that the decision had been taken to withdraw from that opportunity and that a range of other options for the development of the facility were being considered.

13.b Estates Committee meeting on 28 January 2014 UC(13/14)51

13.c Health & Safety Committee meeting on 05 February 2014 UC(13/14)52

13.d Students' Association Committee meeting on 18 February 2014 UC(13/14)53

The NSA President highlighted the NSA "good news" stories.

The outcome of the NSA elections was reported, and it was noted that Dan Smith had been re-elected as President for a further year. It was further noted that Rob Malcom (NSA Vice President) had not stood for re-election having secured employment in a project engineering role.

13.e Audit Committee meeting on 5 March 2014 UC(13/14)54

13.f Human Resources Committee meeting on 11 March 2014 UC(13/14)55

13.g Finance & Commercialisation Committee meeting on 20 March 2014 UC(13/14)56

It was noted that the report of the meeting of the Finance and Commercialisation Committee held on 20 March 2014 would be circulated to members as soon as available.

14.REPORT FROM THE COURT/ULT CONFERENCE UC(13/14)57

14.1. The report from the Court/University Leadership Team Conference on 24 February 2014 was **noted**.

15. DATE OF FUTURE MEETING

15.1. The date of the remaining Court meeting of the session was **noted**.

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