

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 26 October 2015
at 3.45 pm in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

Present: Dr G Forbes (Chair); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Ms M Ali; Mr N Ballantyne; Mr A Boyce; Ms J Boyle; Ms J Brown; Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor); Mr M Connarty; Dr V Ellis; Mr R Hare; Mr W Gallagher; Ms S Goddard; Ms D Guilfoyle; Mr R Kemmer; Professor A Sambell (Vice Principal, Deputy Vice Chancellor); Dr P Stollard; Mrs P Woodburn; Mr N Woodcock.

Apologies: Professor A Scullion; Dr S Jiwa.

In attendance: Mr S Belfer (Finance Director); Dr S Cairncross (Assistant Principal); Mr D Cloy (Clerk to Court); Mr I McIntosh (Assistant Principal); Mr K Ross (interim Director of Human Resources and Development); Professor G Stonehouse (Assistant Principal); Dr G Webber (University Secretary).

Observing: Ms Li Wang (Planning Officer, University Secretary's Office).

1. OPENING REMARKS, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2015/16 Academic year and welcomed the new members Joanne Brown, Alan Boyce, Sophie Goddard and Daire Guilfoyle to their first meeting. Rob Kemmer was also welcomed back to Court following his re-election by Academic Board to serve a second term. Li Wang (Planning Officer, University Secretary's Office) who was observing the meeting as part of her professional development was also welcomed.

1.2. The apologies were **noted**.

Part A For discussion and decision

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2015 UC(14/15)78

2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2015 were **approved**.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minority Ethnic Students in Appeals & Complaints (19.3)

3.1. In response to the query about the apparently disproportionate number of Minority Ethnic students involved in appeals and complaints it was reported that the matter had been reviewed and that many of the complaints related to

fees matters which by their nature disproportionately affected international students, however it did not appear that there was any underlying pattern or issue of concern.

4. COURT AND COURT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UC(15/16)01

- 4.1. Court **noted** the outcome of the lay member recruitment exercise which had taken place over the summer and **approved** its committee convenorships and memberships for 2015/16. Court also **noted** that Neil Ballantyne had been invited to join the University's Investment Campaign Board.

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT UC(15/16)02

- 5.1. The Principal introduced her written report and highlighted her personal submission in response to calls for evidence on the Higher Education Governance Bill from the Finance and Education and Culture Committees of the Scottish Parliament. Recent developments in relation to immigration policy affecting international students were also highlighted as a matter of continuing concern. The improvement in the University's ranking in the Times and Sunday Times league table was also noted.
- 5.2. In discussion it was noted that there were different perspectives on the Higher Education Governance Bill.
- 5.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

6. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2014/15 UC(15/16)03

- 6.1. 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 2014/15. It was noted that the statements had previously been considered and recommended for submission to Court by the Finance & Property Committee and the Audit & Risk Committee. It was noted that the report presented a positive set of results and a number of areas of note from the financial statements were highlighted. A minor amendment to the KPI table in the report was tabled which would be incorporated in the published version.
- 6.2. Thereafter Court **approved** the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2014/15, **authorised** the Chair of Court and the Principal to sign the Financial Statements on its behalf and **authorised** the Principal and the Finance Director to sign the Management Letter of Representation on its behalf.

7. ESTATES STRATEGY UC(15/16)04

- 7.1. The University Secretary highlighted the main points from the proposed Estates Strategy 2015-2025 which had been considered by Finance & Property Committee on 21 October and recommended to Court for approval.

- 7.2. Members welcomed the Strategy which it was agreed provided a coherent framework for future development which would help support delivery of Strategy 2020.
- 7.3. Discussion followed during which the need to consider the space requirements of research staff in future development and the need to provide opportunities for staff to feed in to decisions were noted. In relation to community use of University facilities a range of current and planned activities which would make the University a more open and permeable environment were noted. It was further noted that requirements for investment in technology would be considered alongside the Strategy, and the role of the newly established Digital Strategy & Investment Committee in overseeing the delivery, and ongoing development of organisational digital strategy was noted. In relation to controls around phasing and funding of projects arising from the Strategy it was noted that plans for specific projects would be brought through ULT and F&PC at particular points. With regard to the phasing of work to provide facilities for computing it was noted that consideration would be given to ways in which earlier investment could be made on interim facilities which would have ongoing use and benefit once the substantive investment had been made. In relation to the availability of funding for projects in the context of the future funding environment it was noted that assumptions regarding funding had been conservative and that there were a variety of funding strategies and mechanisms available. Thanks were extended to all those involved in the Strategy's development.
- 7.4. Thereafter, Court **approved** the Estates Strategy 2015-2025.

8. REPORT FROM THE TNE SUB-GROUP

UC(15/16)05

- 8.1. Court received the paper which presented recommendations from the short-life Working Group on Transnational Education (TNE) which it established at its meeting on 27 October 2014 with a remit to scrutinise and agree models for TNE in the context of Strategy 2020 and identify the appropriate mechanisms for risk management of TNE activities.
- 8.2. Discussion followed during which members welcomed the approach outlined and the focus on managing and limiting risk. It was emphasised that adequate resourcing and investment was important to ensure the effective execution of the models proposed.
- 8.3. Members reflected on the operation of the Working Group which was the first to have operated under the Protocol established at the last Court Effectiveness Review. It was recognised that, whilst the Group had achieved a good outcome, the process had taken longer than anticipated and that, in hindsight, greater focus on the defining of the groups remit and establishing realistic timescales at the outset would have been beneficial. This was noted as a point to consider in establishing future Working Groups.
- 8.4. Thereafter, Court:
- a) **agreed** the recommendations outlined in the report.
 - b) **agreed** that the Working Group has fulfilled its remit and should now be

disestablished.

9. PRE-COURT BRIEFING SESSIONS: FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION UC(15/16)06

- 9.1. Court considered the feedback received on the pre-Court strategy briefing sessions and **agreed** that presentation topics from among those identified would be scheduled for the remaining meetings of the session.

Part B For information

10. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 16 OCTOBER 2015 UC(15/16)07

- 10.1. Court **noted** the minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board of 16 October 2015.

11. ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURES UC(15/16)08

- 11.1. Court received the report which provided an update on three projects which supported a culture change for the delivery of strategy 2020: the University Academic Structures Project post go live on 1 August 2015; the Career Development Project post the 2015 Promotions and Award of Title round; and the Academic Leadership and Development Project.
- 11.2. Discussion followed during which the varied impact that low success rates in the Promotion and Award of Title round had on the morale of academic staff was recognised. The Principal acknowledged the disappointment of unsuccessful staff and highlighted the developmental approach being taken to support such staff, whilst articulating how the new academic career framework and the associated appointment and promotion criteria were fully aligned to delivery of Strategy 2020 and to the achievement of the University's academic ambitions. It was noted that feedback received on the process had been taken on board and that award of title would be a separate process to the annual promotion round in the future. Members recognised that change was difficult and emphasised the importance of responding to feedback and continuing to support and develop staff to enable their positive engagement. The importance of a strategic approach to managing organisational change was recognised and the role of the Strategic Change Project Board which was monitoring significant change projects across the University was highlighted. It was also noted that the development of a People and Organisational Development Strategy would be taken forward by the incoming Director of Human Resources and Development. It was also agreed that Court would receive a strategy briefing on organisational change and development ahead of its next meeting in December.
- 11.3. Thereafter Court **noted** the report and reaffirmed its commitment to the direction of travel.

12. REPORT ON LEAGUE TABLE PERFORMANCE UC(15/16)09

- 12.1. Court received the paper which provided an overview of the University's performance in the three UK league tables that it appears in; the Complete University Guide, the Guardian University Guide and the Times University Guide.
- 12.2. A member noted that it would be helpful to hear about the future strategy for Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care.
- 12.3. Thereafter Court **noted** the report.

13. REPORT ON STUDENT SURVEYS UC(15/16)10

- 13.1. Court received the paper which presented key trends across the various student satisfaction surveys undertaken by Edinburgh Napier University over time and identified some of the actions being undertaken by the University in response to the student feedback received.
- 13.2. Discussion followed during which members agreed that future papers should provide greater analysis on the performance of individual areas and the actions being taken to address the issues identified, while welcoming the information provided. It was noted that the inclusion of School action plans would provide the detail sought.
- 13.3. Thereafter Court **noted** the report.

14. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL ON INSTITUTION LED REVIEW UC(15/16)11

- 14.1. Court **noted** the final submitted version of the annual report to the SFC on institution-led review and enhancement activities.

Part C Not intended for discussion

15. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES

16.a Nominations Committee meeting on 30 September 2015* UC(15/16)12

- 16.1. The report was **noted**.

16.b Finance & Property Committee meeting on 21 October 2015*

- 16.2 The report was not available in time for the meeting and would be circulated to members as soon as available.

16.c Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 21 October 2015* UC(15/16)14

- 16.3 The report was **noted**.

16. CORPORATE PLAN 2014/15 – FINAL UPDATE **UC(15/16)15**

16.1. Court **noted** the final update on the 2014/15 Corporate Plan.

17. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COURT BUSINESS **UC(15/16)16**

17.1. Court **noted** its indicative forward schedule of business for 2015/16 and noted that the scheduling of the People and Organisational Development Strategy was subject to review.

18. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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

19. ADDITIONAL ITEMS

19.1. Court received an update on recent activities from the Edinburgh Napier Students' Association.

19.2. In response to a member's question about the University's preparedness to protect its systems against cyber-crime, assurance was provided that governance structures were in place and regular testing was undertaken to help mitigate this risk.

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