



CENTRAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

20 January 2015

Minute

Present:

The Principal
Senior Vice-Principal Professor C Jeffery
Vice-Principal Professor D Meill
Vice-Principal Professor C Breward
Vice-Principal Professor J Haywood
Vice Principal Professor R Kenway
Vice-Principal Professor S Rigby
Vice-Principal Professor J Seckl
Vice-Principal Professor J Norman
Vice-Principal Professor J Smith
Vice-Principal Professor M Bownes
University Secretary, Ms S Smith
Mr H Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
Mrs T Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
Mr P McNaull, Director of Finance
Mrs Z Lewandowski, Director of HR

In attendance:

Assistant Principal Professor A Trew, on behalf of Vice-Principal Professor Yellowlees
Dr C Elliot, on behalf of Vice-Principal Professor Sir John Savill
Professor C Clarke, Head of School of Health in Social Science
Ms L Chalmers, Director of Legal Services
Mr D Waddell, Director of Edinburgh Research Innovation
Dr I Conn, Director of Communications and Marketing
Mr G Douglas, Deputy Secretary, Student Experience
Mr D Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Mr B MacGregor, Director of User Services Division
Mr D Kyles, Chief Internal Auditor
Professor I Pirie, Assistant Principal Learning and Development (for item 4 only)
Mrs K Bowman, Director of Procurement (for item 10 only)
Dr K J Novosel, Head of Court Services
Mrs K Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services

Apologies:

Vice-Principal Professor A Morris
Mr G Jebb, Director of Estates and Buildings

1 Minute

Paper A

The Minute of the meeting held on 12 November 2014 was approved.

2 Principal's Communications

The Principal reported on the following: the University's success in the REF 2014, ranked the highest in Scotland for quality and breadth of research, all staff were to be commended and the strength of research impact and effective communication was noteworthy; funding uncertainty for the next academic year with likely pressure on funding; UCAS applications for September 2015 showed a positive upward trend; a complex debate on HE governance continued with legislation planned by the Scottish Government.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3 Enhancing Student Support

Paper B

Professor Ian Pirie outlined key recommendations for refinements to the Personal Tutor system in response to the detailed evaluation of phase one for 'on-campus' undergraduate students.

Students reported satisfaction with the effectiveness of Personal Tutor meetings but there remained a high degree of variability of the student experience across the Schools.

Following discussion CMG agreed there needed to continue to be a diversity of approach to the Personal Tutor system and that the focus should be on the role and status of the Personal Tutor and sharing good practice. This required effective induction, line-management and incentivising through appraisal and review and the Student Support Implementation Group should work with colleagues in HR to progress this. As part of this, CMG endorsed the proposal to gather data on PT effectiveness at School and individual PT level, and further endorsed a proposal to consider an increased number of contact points with PT's in the first years of study but a reduction in the number in later stages.

4 Strategic Vision 2015

Paper C

CMG considered the near final draft overarching narrative for the University's Strategic Vision 2025.

CMG was asked to consider and input into the document, which had been widely circulated to ensure a shared understanding of the University's strengths, opportunities and overall strategic direction.

A number of detailed suggestions were made. A Court seminar on 9 February 2015 will review and endorse the Strategic Vision 2025 to inform the development of the next three year iteration of the Strategic Plan.

5 Turing Institute

Professor Kenway provided a confidential update on the establishment of the Turing Institute. *This would be a Joint Venture with four other universities and EPSRC, establishing a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. The next steps are the signing of the JV agreement and appointment of a Chair of the Turing Institute Board. It is anticipated the Project Board will hand over to the Turing Institute Board around April 2015.*

The intention is for the Turing Institute to be based in the British Library, however a suitable location for the Edinburgh activities was currently being investigated. CMG expressed support for the commercial opportunities and the University taking a lead role. CMG noted the potential scale of opportunity could impact on the University, particularly IT infrastructure and there should be discussion initiated with this area.

6 SRUC

CMG noted that the Statement of Intent letter had been signed for a strategic alliance and the challenge was now around timings. It was essential to progress due diligence rapidly to enable Court to have oversight of the key risks before SRUC would be in a position to consult its internal stakeholders.

7 USS

CMG noted that UUK have now developed a revised proposal for pension reform closer to the UCU position.

The University had used the advice of the Court sub-group, which had no conflict of interest. The University had consistently questioned the actuarial assumptions, stressed that the revised scheme needed to be attractive and that more information and modelling tools should be available to employees.

USS had now developed a benefits modeller. The period of negotiation has been extended to 29 January 2015 and UCU had suspended industrial action in this period. It is hopeful that there will be an agreed proposal by 29 January following a JNC meeting for formal 60 day consultation.

8 Fossils Fuels Review group

Paper D

The Senior Vice Principal reported on progress from the short life working group on fossils fuel. A range of evidence was now being considered and the Group aimed to present a final report to CMG on 14 April 2015.

9 Consultation on Procurement Rules for Scotland

Paper E

The Director of Procurement alerted CMG to planned legislative changes in procurement rules and the need to be in a position to ensure compliance. Procurement was largely devolved to Colleges and Schools and a senior champion should be identified to support this.

CMG agreed with the need for a senior procurement contact to be identified in each College and School. A brief summary of the legislative changes when approved and their implications for the University was requested.

ROUTINE ITEMS

10 Finance Director's Update

Paper F

CMG noted the report and in particular the pressure on government capital and revenue expenditure for HE. The TRAC return provided insight into the University's cost base and the financial interdependency of its different teaching and research areas. The University would increasingly need to consider its business processes and opportunities for productivity gains to offset the anticipated cuts.

11 Management Accounts up to 31 December 2014

Paper G

CMG noted the financial position to date, the increase in revenue but also increase in costs, the planned revenue funded building refurbishment and the need for budget holders to consider affordability and sustainability.

12 Quarter 1 Management Accounts Forecast

Paper H

CMG noted the current forecast outturn position; a net surplus of £19m, 2.3% of forecast income, 0.7% below the target 3% and £3.1m adverse to budget, mainly as a result of building refurbishment costs. A chart showing the trend for staff costs as a proportion of income indicated an upward trend.

13 10 Year Financial Forecast

Paper I

CMG noted the report and the projections for the next 10 year period.

Given the anticipated pressure on HE funding, both growth and cost containment needed to be a focus with financial decision makers aware of their responsibility for managing costs. During discussion, concern was noted at the rise in staff costs, particularly non teaching staff costs and the Principal noted that a Post Review Group may require to be established.

14 Internal Audit Status Report

Paper J

CMG noted the report and the progress on delivery of the 2014/15 audit plan. CMG welcomed the positive trend in closing audit issues with messages from Risk Management Committee and Audit and Risk Committee on the importance of closing issues filtering down. It was planned to provide a graphical representation of overdue issue trends to show the movement across each period in terms of issues being closed and new issues which have become overdue. It was agreed that internal audit's follow up work on Tier 4 compliance was particularly important.

15 Health and Safety Quarterly Report

Paper K

CMG noted the report, that the number of accidents and incidents are broadly similar to previous years and that adequate controls are in place. CMG had previously been informed of two Health and Safety Executive improvement notices that were being appealed. The HSE investigation was ongoing and required a considerable amount of staff time and will incur costs to the University.

16 Insurance Update

Paper L

CMG noted the paper summarising the result of a review by Zurich Municipal quantifying the financial impact of a significant business interruption and the University's resilience to any interruptions. As a result of this report the indemnity levels and periods were increased. Areas for further development had been identified and the report would be considered by the Risk Management Committee on 2 February 2015 for fuller debate of the risks.

17 University Events in Brussels

Paper M

CMG considered the proposed plans to raise the University's profile through a series of events based in Brussels. Members supported the approach of two or three large events and there was discussion of the importance of engaging events with an interactive element, where appropriate.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING (Please note these items are not normally discussed.)

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| 18 | Principal's Strategy Group | Paper N |
| | The report was noted. | |
| 19 | Confirmation of Student Rents for 2015/16 and indicative increases for 2016/17 and 2017/18 | Paper O |
| | CMG noted that student rent levels for 2015-2016 had been set within the agreed envelope and approved the indicative increases for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 as set out in the paper. | |
| 20 | Fee proposals | Paper P |
| | The proposed fees as set out in the paper were approved. | |
| 21 | Creation of new Chairs | Paper Q Paper R |
| | CMG approved the establishment of new Chairs in the College of Science and Engineering and the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine as set out in the papers. | |
| 22 | Date of next meeting | |
| | Wednesday, 4 March 2015 at 2.30pm in the Raeburn Room, Old College. | |