



CENTRAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

14 April 2015

Minute

- Present:** Senior Vice-Principal Professor C Jeffery
Vice-Principal Professor D Miell
Vice-Principal Professor M Bownes
Vice-Principal Professor J Seckl
Vice-Principal Professor J Smith
Vice-Principal Professor S Welburn
Vice-Principal Professor J Norman
Mr H Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
Mrs T Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
Mr P McNaull, Director of Finance
Mr G Jebb, Director of Estates
- 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
Dr I Conn, Director of Communications and Marketing
Mr D Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Mr B MacGregor, Director of User Services Division
Mr D Kyles, Chief Internal Auditor
Mr D Gillespie, Head of HR, on behalf of Ms Z Lewandowski, Director of HR
Ms B Pegado, President of Edinburgh University Students' Association (for item 3 only)
Ms T Boardman, Vice-President Services of Edinburgh University Students' Association (for item 3 only)
Mrs K Bowman, Director of Procurement (for item 7 only)
Ms K Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services
- Apologies:** The Principal
Vice-Principal Professor S Rigby
Vice Principal Professor R Kenway
Vice-Principal Professor A Morris
Vice-Principal Professor J Haywood
Vice-Principal Professor C Breward
University Secretary, Ms S Smith
Mr G McLachlan, Chief Information Officer

1 Minute

Paper A

The Minute of the meeting held on 4 March 2015 was approved with a minor amendment.

2 Principal's Communications

Senior Vice-Principal Professor Jeffery on behalf of the Principal reported on the following: the University success in moving up 17 places to 29 in the recently published Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings; ongoing conversations with the Scottish Government in relation to research funding and maintaining international competitiveness; the external uncertainty for the sector with the imminent UK election; the implications of the Scottish Government's Higher Education Governance Bill.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3 Fossil Fuels Review Group

Paper D

CMG noted that in January 2013 the University was the first University in Europe and only the second in the world to sign up to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment. As a result of that commitment, the University has been actively reviewing its existing Responsible Investment policy.

The Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) formally requested that the University consider divestment from fossil fuels companies and it was agreed by CMG to establish the Fossil Fuels Review Group, to consider the case for disinvestment in fossil fuels. The group was chaired by the Senior Vice-Principal, Professor Charlie Jeffery, and consisted of a range of experts in climate policy and science, geosciences and law, as well as representation from EUSA and senior University managers.

The group had now prepared a report for CMG with a series of options and recommendations for consideration. Court will consider the report at its meeting on 11 May, including consideration of the discussions at CMG.

CMG discussed the report with a wide range of opinions expressed. These included concern from some schools in the College of Science and Engineering regarding the impact of a divestment decision on academic freedom by potentially restricting areas of research. However it was also recognised that companies involved in the extraction of high carbon-emitting fuels also fund research into greater energy efficiency and alternative energy sources to mitigate climate change. There was also concern that negative publicity could be detrimental to students who may be expecting to work for these companies.

CMG noted that the report conclusions and recommendations were nuanced and did not recommend a binary decision of either no additional action or full divestment from all energy related fossil fuel companies.

It recognised the growth of research areas based on carbon mitigation and climate change strategy. Research fields focussed on carbon capture and storage frequently used the same techniques and often people as the extraction and exploitation of fossils fuels so there was much cross over. The report therefore provided a considered set of options that can be taken forward concurrently to assist the University in making a contribution to solving the climate problem through its investment strategy, without inappropriately restricting its ability to undertake research and teaching.

The EUSA representatives welcomed the report and the acceptance that human influence on the climate system is clear. Involvement in the group had fostered a greater understanding of the research and teaching implications and the complexities around the area of disinvestment. EUSA's priority was that the University approve the report and implement the recommendations without delay.

CMG agreed on the complexity of the issue and that the balanced and measured approach taken by the group in presenting a series of options was appropriate and offered the opportunity to contribute to climate change mitigation through teaching and research and to take a positive role in working with companies to drive change.

4 SRUC

The Court SRUC Sub Group had met on 27 March 2015 and considered a progress report by the Director of Corporate Services' team and an independent report by PwC. The key risks and opportunities had been considered and it had been agreed to continue with detailed due diligence and the development of a business plan, with another Sub Group meeting scheduled for 9 June, prior to the Court meeting on 22 June 2015.

There had also been a meeting between the Court SRUC Sub Group and the equivalent SRUC Sub Group on 10 April. It was noted that SRUC was complex organisation, with a mix of HE and FE and a diverse and geographically spread estate, which presented challenges in making progress within the planned timescale.

5 The Alan Turing Institute

CMG noted the Joint Venture agreement had been signed by all parties on 31 March 2015 and the establishment of the Alan Turing Institute as a registered charity was progressing.

6 Delegated Authority Schedule

Paper B

CMG noted the current Delegated Authority Schedule was approved by Court in 2003 and revised in 2010. It was therefore due a refresh and a consultation draft had been circulated for discussion.

Members' comments included concerns about: the thresholds in section 6 for funding bids, where greater clarity of categorisation was needed; the estates thresholds in sections 4 and 5; the lack of clarification of committee, convener and signatory authority.

Members were invited to provide feedback and it was noted that discussion was ongoing with key staff and further work and revision to the DAS was anticipated through direct consultation and consideration by University committees prior to referral to Court for approval.

7 Procurement Consultation Response

Paper C

At its meeting in January, CMG had been alerted to the new procurement legislation which would be likely to impact on the University conduct of its spending by introducing: new and lower thresholds; additional requirements for transparency and publication; a new enforcement regime.

A draft response to the Scottish Government 'Public Consultation on Changes to the Public Procurement Rules' was considered and it was agreed that a response would be submitted by the deadline of 30 April 2015, approved by the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning.

8 Equality Papers

Athena Swan Institutional Silver application

Paper E

CMG noted the University had held Institutional AS Bronze since 2006, and successfully renewed in 2009 and 2012 and now met the criteria to apply for Institutional AS Silver.

CMG considered the draft Action Plan which forms part of the Silver application, due for submission to the Equality Challenge Unit by 30 April 2015. Feedback had been received to date regarding the need for more specific and measurable targets and further comments were welcomed by 23 April to inform the final submission.

Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming Progress report

Paper F

CMG noted the draft Equality Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes progress reports, which will be published on the University's Equality website by 30 April 2015

ROUTINE ITEMS

9 Financial Issues

Paper G

CMG noted the report and the favourable variance against budget to date. The latest forecast outturn position remains an unfavourable variance against the annual budget however the Q3 full year forecast in May should provide further clarification of the position.

The key metrics using data from HR, Finance and Estates were helpful and the indication of an improving income per staff FTE and per m² when compared to the same period last year was welcomed.

10 Any Other Business

CMG noted that two University projects were the only Scottish bids to secure funding from the UK Research Partnership Investment Fund, from only seven successful bids in the UK.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

11 Rents Guarantor Scheme

Paper H

The proposed Rent Guarantor Scheme as set out in the paper was approved.

12 Laigh Year regulations

Paper I

The proposal to update the calculation of Laigh Year payments as set out in the paper was approved.

13 Proposals for Chair Establishment and Changes

Paper J

CMG approved foundation of a Chair of Materials Engineering, as set out in the paper.

14 Health and Safety Quarterly Report

Paper K

The report was noted.

15 Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 19 May 2015 at 2.30pm in the Raeburn Room, Old College.