

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the University Court of the University of Edinburgh held in the Raeburn Room, Old College on Monday, 19 October 2009.

Present: The Rector (in the chair)
The Principal
Mr D A Connell
Professor A M Smyth
Mrs M Tait
Dr M Alliotta
Professor D Finnegan
Professor P Munn
The Rt Hon G Grubb, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh
Professor J Barbour
Professor S Monro
Mr M Murray
Mr D Brook
Mr T Graham, President Students' Representative Council
Mr E Beswick, Vice-President Students' Representative Council

In attendance: Ms S Beattie-Smith, Rector's Assessor
Vice-Principal Professor N Brown
Vice-Principal Professor J Haywood
Vice-Principal Professor A McMahon
Vice-Principal Professor L Waterhouse
Mr M D Cornish, University Secretary
Mr N Paul, Director of Corporate Services
Dr A Cornish, Director of Planning and Deputy Secretary
Mr I Conn, Director of Communications and Marketing
Mr A Currie, Director of Estates and Buildings
Mr J Gorringe, Director of Finance
Ms J McCloskey, Principal's Policy and Executive Officer
Dr K J Novosel, Head of Court Services

Apologies: The Rt Hon Lord Cameron of Lochbroom
Dr J Markland, Vice-Convener
Professor L Yellowlees
Mr P Budd
Ms A Richards
Ms G Stewart
Mr D Workman

The Court received a presentation from Dr A Cornish, Director of Planning and Deputy Secretary on International Benchmarking Collaboration.

A FORMAL BUSINESS

1 MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2009

Paper A1

The Minute of the meeting held on 22 June 2009 was approved as a correct record.

Court welcomed Mr David Brook to his first meeting of Court in his capacity as Non-Teaching Staff Assessor. Court further welcomed Ms Sarah Beattie-Smith and Vice-Principal Professor April McMahon to their first meeting of Court in their new capacities.

2 VACATION COURT

Paper A2

Court homologated the decision of the Vacation Court to approve authorisation of the opening of a University bank account outwith the UK.

3 RECTOR'S ASSESSOR

Paper A3

Court noted that the Rector had appointed Ms Sarah Beattie-Smith to the position of Rector's Assessor with effect from 7 September 2009 to succeed Mr A Ramsay who was standing down due to relocation to England.

4 POSTGRADUATE STUDENT

The University Secretary made a short statement regarding the position of a postgraduate student.

B PRINCIPAL'S BUSINESS

1 PRINCIPAL'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Principal reported as follows:

Economic Climate: Court noted the anticipated reduction in future Scottish Government funds in light of recent UK Government announcements and the anticipated impact on sector funding. Against this background, the University, in common with other institutions world-wide, was experiencing an increase in high calibre student applications which was challenging to manage. The University continued however to take forward opportunities for capital investment and staff recruitment: three exceptional new Professors had been recently appointed to take forward research in the areas of carbon storage, innovation in the life sciences and vascular regeneration.

Scottish Government draft budget: The Scottish Government announced its draft budget last month, key points for the sector are a 2.2% increase in the overall budget for the Education and Lifelong Learning portfolio, a 3.6% or 2.1% in real terms increase for universities and significant proposed cutbacks in teacher training funding of around 30%.

Contingency Planning: Over the summer the University had undertaken a contingency planning exercise covering a three year period commencing 2010/2011.

Scottish Funding Council: Proposals were now out for consultation to reduce the current 12 subject funding groups to 4 which, if implemented, would result in significant redistribution of funding between subjects and institutions.

Undergraduate and postgraduate intakes 2009/2010: The University was over target by around 450 for home/EU undergraduates and 119 for overseas undergraduates. 2010/11 intake numbers will require to be strictly contained: PSG was taking an active oversight of admissions processes for next year. Home/EU and overseas postgraduate numbers were up on figures for the same period last year.

ERI 2008/2009 outturn: Court welcomed the very successful year for research applications, awards secured and commercialisation activities.

Pay negotiations: Discussions were continuing nationally with trade unions to secure a pay settlement, Unison had accepted the final employers' offer of 0.5%, but other unions had rejected it.

2009 National Student Survey Results: The University's overall position had remained

the same as last year which was disappointing given the efforts of Colleges and Schools to improve the student experience. The University was actively engaging with EUSA to ascertain how best to initiate further improvements.

Tuition fees: There had been much recent debate on this matter in the media: the University continued not to take a public position.

Modern languages provision: Plans for provision of modern languages, as agreed last academic session, had been prepared and a report would be presented to the next meeting of Court.

League Tables: The University had been ranked 20th in the THE-QS World University Tables 2009.

Universities UK: A successful annual conference had been held in Pollock Halls at the beginning of September 2009.

UK Minister for Higher Education: Mr David Lammy visited the Informatics Forum in September, meeting colleagues involved in research commercialisation and students and staff involved in widening participation initiatives.

Edinburgh International Festivals: The University had played a leading role in this year's international festivals, being the largest venue provider and hosting 'Fringe Central' at Appleton Tower.

Santander Universities: Emilio Botín, Chairman Banco Santander visited the University in July 2009 and announced funding from the Bank for 20 additional scholarships for Latin American students.

Various opening events: The Chancellor had opened the new Euan MacDonald Centre for Motor Neurone Disease and Ian Rankin had opened the refurbished main Library over the summer. A child epilepsy research centre was opened on 19 October 2009 made possible by a £1m pledge from the Muir Maxwell Trust, a paediatric epilepsy charity.

EUSA Advice Place: Court congratulated EUSA on its Advice Place being awarded the Matrix Standard: a national quality award for providers of information, advice and guidance for learners. It is thought to be the first students' association facility to have been granted the accreditation.

Court welcomed the intention to prepare a communications report for future Court meeting on various international, national and University issues and events. This would be circulated in advance with the agenda and papers for meetings. The Principal would continue to provide a verbal report, but this would be more succinct, focusing on issues of particular strategic importance to the University.

2 VICE-PRINCIPAL AND HEAD OF THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Court welcomed the appointment of Professor Dorothy Miell to the position of Vice-Principal and Head of the College of Humanities and Social Science with effect from 1 March 2010.

3 HONORARY VICE-PRINCIPAL AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Paper B3

Court approved the proposals to appoint Professor Ian Howard, Principal of the Edinburgh College of Art an Honorary Vice-Principal for an initial period of three years in recognition of the close working partnership between the University and the College

of Art and Professor Martin Siegert, Head of the School of GeoScience, Assistant Principal for Energy and Climate Change for an initial period of two years: the commencement date for each appointment was yet to be determined.

C SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

1 REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

In the absence of Dr Markland, Mr Murray introduced the papers previously circulated.

Report from Central Management Group Meetings of 17 June and 23 September 2009 **Paper C1.1**

The Scottish Government's Procurement Handbook and APUC (Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges) Procurement Manual were adopted by Court for implementation across the University in line with revised internal procurement arrangements. Court further approved the revised terms of reference for the Staff Committee and commended the draft Policy on Dignity and Respect which would be available in its final format for approval at the next meeting of Court. The significant areas of activity being undertaken by the Staff Committee were noted in particular the areas around performance review and reward and recognition for teaching and how these related to the promotion process for academic staff. The comments in the Staff Committee report on nursery provision were also noted. Court further welcomed the work on contingency planning in respect of a pandemic flu.

Report on other Items

Paper C1.2

Court welcomed the full year research and commercialisation report noting the excellent achievements of ERI which had been discussed in detail at the Court seminar on 12 October 2009. It was noted that progress was being made with the EUCLID project and that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had therefore now agreed to receive exception reports. The debate on an appropriate way forward and response to the Trustees of the SBS following the outcome of the Scheme's triennial valuation results were noted and Court endorsed the process being proposed including seeking independent actuarial advice for the University. The reduction in insurance premiums was welcomed.

2 REPORT OF ESTATES ADVISORY GROUP

Paper C2

The change of name of the Estates Advisory Group to the Estates Committee and the revised terms of reference for the Committee were approved by Court. Estates and building issues had formed part of the financial scenario planning undertaken over the summer and Court noted the revised funding assumptions and capital projection plan; the ability to initiate projects should funding become available was welcomed. Assurances were provided on the detailed risk analysis available for each significant capital project, the on-going monitoring of funding assumptions and the liaison between estates and buildings and finance and as appropriate development and alumni on financial and funding matters. The various recommendations as listed on the coversheet to the paper were approved by Court noting in particular the funding now available to take forward the resurfacing of the Old College Quad. In respect of the next phase in the refurbishment of the Main Library, Court noted the discussions on the co-location of certain student services to the main library and that further information would be available at the next meeting of the Main Library's Strategic Committee on this matter.

3 REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

Paper C3

Court approved the extensively revised terms of reference for the Internal Audit Service which now provided better clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the Service and was

in line with the revised guidance on audit practice as issued by the Scottish Funding Council. It was welcomed that the Audit Committee had now completed its performance review 2008/2009 of Internal and External Audit Services and that the Committee had concluded that both services were performing very satisfactorily. Court further noted the content of the draft Minute of the last meeting of the Audit Committee.

4 REPORT OF NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Paper C4

On the recommendations of the Nominations Committee, Court approved the following appointments:

Professor S Monro and Ms A Richard to be re-appointed for a further three years as Co-Opted Members of Court until the end of 2012/2013 and Mr M Murray to be re-appointed as a Co-Opted Member of Court until the end of 2011/2012.

Mr D Bentley's appointment as an external Member of the Audit Committee to be extended until the end of December 2010, Professor A Smyth's appointment to the Audit Committee to be extended until the end of 2010/2011 and Ms A Richard's appointment to the end of 2012/2013.

Mr D Connell's appointment to the Committee on University Benefactors to be extended until the end of 2010/2011 and Professor L Yellowlees' appointment until the end of 2009/2010.

Mr M Murray's appointment to the Estates Committee (previously EPAG) to be extended until the end of 2011/2012.

Vice-Principal Professor A McMahon to be appointed to the Finance and General Purposes Committee with effect from 1 September 2009 for as long as she holds the planning and resources portfolio, Mr D Connell's appointment to the Finance and General Purposes Committee be extended until the end of 2010/2011, Mr M Murray's appointment to the end of 2011/2012 and Professor S Monro's appointment to the end of 2012/2013.

Professor A Smyth's appointment to the Nominations Committee to be extended until the end of 2010/2011.

Professor S Monro's appointment to the Remuneration Committee to be extended until the end of 2012/2013.

Dr J Markland's appointment to the Staff Committee to be extended until the end of 2010/2011.

Vice-Principal Professor A McMahon to be appointed Convener of the University's Research Ethics Committee and Professor S Monro's appointment to this Committee to be extended until the end of 2012/2013.

Mr D Brook to be appointed a Member of the University's Collections Advisory Committee for three years until the end of 2012/2013.

Mr M Murray's appointment in respect of the Code of Practice on reporting malpractice and raising concerns under the Public Interest Disclosure Legislation to be extended until the end of 2011/2012.

Vice-Principal Professor Nigel Brown to be appointed a Curator of Patronage with immediate effect until the end of 2011/2012.

5 PROPOSED REPEAL OF THE COMMISSIONERS' ORDINANCE AND PROMULGATION OF A NEW ORDINANCE ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF **Paper C5**

Court noted that it had been the University's desire for some time to replace the present 'Commissioners' Ordinance' with more up to date, flexible and legally compliant arrangements for regulating the employment of academic staff. Court approved the proposed approach which had been formulated following discussion with colleagues from the eight older Scottish Universities affected by the current arrangements, an encouraging statement from the Scottish Government on its policy in regard to these matters and the success of the University of Stirling in securing revisions to its Charter.

Two Ordinances would require to be taken forward, the first to empower the University Court to vary or revoke the current Commissioners' Ordinance and the second to put in place the new provisions which would continue to recognise a commitment to academic freedom; it was unclear as yet whether the first Ordinance would require to be approved by the Privy Council before the second could be advanced or whether both could be considered simultaneously. Court further noted that prior to submitting final Ordinances to the Privy Council for approval the University required to initiate an eight week consultation period during which time the observations of the General Council and the Senate would be sought on the draft Ordinances and there would also be discussion with trade unions. Any observations received would be brought to the next meeting of Court for consideration on the way forward.

6 DRAFT CORPORATE GOVERNANCE STATEMENT **Paper C6**

Court approved the draft Corporate Governance Statement noting that it was little changed to the version approved in respect of the 2007/2008 Accounts.

7 SUMMARY OF OUTCOME OF DISCUSSIONS WITH COURT MEMBERS **Paper C7**

In accordance with the framework agreed by Court in December 2008, the University Secretary and the Vice-Convenor of Court had initiated a series of meetings with Court members to ascertain their views on the operation of Court and on support available to Court members. The paper set out a summary of these discussions and the main themes emerging. In the absence of the Vice-Convenor it was agreed that a final paper be prepared for consideration at the next meeting of Court which would include any further comments received from any Court member. Court noted and endorsed the suggestions set out in the paper to improve the operation of meetings of Court.

A paper on taking forward the formal process to review the effectiveness of Court and its Committees would also be presented to the next meeting of Court.

8 ANNUAL REVIEW **Paper C8**

Court approved the articles to be included in the University's Annual Review subject to incorporation of any further comments received by Court Members and noted that this was the formal report on University activities required to be presented to the General Council.

D ITEMS FOR NOTING AND FORMAL APPROVAL

1 ACADEMIC REPORT **Paper D1**

Court noted the report from the Senatus Academicus of its electronic Senate conducted

