

**MINUTE OF A MEETING** of the University Court of the University of Edinburgh held in the Raeburn Room, Old College, on Monday 9 December 2013.

**Present:** Rector (in chair)  
Sheriff Principal E Bowen  
Ms D Davidson  
Mr A Johnston  
Professor A M Smyth  
Professor J Ansell  
Professor D Finnegan  
Professor J Taylor  
Professor S Monro, Vice-Convener  
Mr D Bentley  
Dr R Black  
Mr P Budd  
Dr C Masters  
Ms A Lamb  
Mr H Murdoch, President Students' Representative Council

**In attendance:** Senior Vice-Principal Professor M Bownes  
Vice-Principal Professor J Haywood  
Vice-Principal Professor C Jeffery  
Vice-Principal Professor J Seckl  
Vice-Principal Professor L Yellowlees  
University Secretary, Ms S Smith  
Vice-Principal Mr N Paul, Director of Corporate Services  
Dr I Conn, Director Communications and Marketing  
Mr A Currie, Director of Estates and Buildings  
Ms S Gupta, Director of Human Resources  
Mr P McNaull, Director of Finance  
Mrs T Slaven, Deputy Secretary Strategic Planning  
Ms F Boyd, Head of Stakeholder Relations and Senior Executive Officer  
Dr K J Novosel, Head of Court Services

**Apologies:** The Principal  
The Rt Hon D Wilson, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh  
Dr M Aliotta  
Mr L Matheson  
Mrs E Noad  
Dr A Richards  
Ms K Haigh, Vice-President Students' Representative Council  
Ms S Beattie-Smith, Rector's Assessor

Court received a presentation on the Research Excellence Framework REF2014 delivered by Mrs Tracey Slaven Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning. Court congratulated all those involved across the University in preparing the submission in particular Mrs T Slaven Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning, Vice-Principal Professor J Seckl, Ms M Buchan, Head of Research Policy and Planning Services and the Directors of Professional Services in Schools.

## **A FORMAL BUSINESS**

There was confirmation that the present matriculation process involved students signing up to the rules and reputation of the University.

At its last meeting, Court had approved the arrangements to take forward the recruitment of the next Vice-Convener of Court, Co-opted members of Court and an external member on the Investment Committee. However there remained an outstanding matter around the requirement within the new Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance for formal arrangements to be put in place, through the student and staff members on Court, to enable the views of students and staff to be taken into account prior to the Vice-Convener appointment being finalised.

Court approved the proposal to facilitate confidential discussions between student and staff members of Court and the other two EUSA Sabbatical Officers and each of the candidates prior to the candidates being interviewed. The views of the staff and student group on the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate would then be fed back to the interview panel to assist it in making its recommendation to the Nominations Committee and Court.

Court welcomed Professor Julie Taylor to this her first meeting of Court as a Senate Assessor.

## **2 SENATE ASSESSOR**

**Paper A2**

Court noted the outcome of the election to appoint a Senate Assessor on Court and that Professor Taylor would be serving on Court from 15 November 2013 until 31 July 2014.

## **B PRINCIPAL'S BUSINESS**

### **1 PRINCIPAL'S COMMUNICATIONS**

**Paper B1**

Court noted the items in the Principal's Report and in the absence of the Principal, Senior Vice-Principal Professor Bownes provided additional information on: the Principal's visit to Beijing and his attendance at the Nobel Prize Award ceremony in Stockholm on 10 December 2013 at which Emeritus Professor Peter Higgs would be receiving his medal; the Minister of Universities and Sciences announcement of funding for new Centres for Doctoral Training with the University securing funding for individual and joint centres; the Chancellor's Autumn statement in particular the £10.7m of funding for the Higgs' Innovation Centre, the removal of the cap on University places in England and Wales and Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) funding; and recent industrial action. Court further noted the appointment of Ms Leigh Chalmers to the position of Director of Legal Services and that the General Council would be holding its statutory meeting in June 2014 in Toronto.

### **2 VICE-PRINCIPAL UPDATE**

**Paper B2**

On the recommendations of the Principal, Court approved the following:

Professor Jane Norman, Chair of Maternal and Fetal Health to be appointed Vice-Principal Equality and Diversity from 1 January 2014 for a period of three years.

Dr Tina Harrison's time commitment to the role of Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance to be increased 80% for the academic year 2014/2015.

Professor Mona Siddiqui's time commitment in the role of Assistant Principal, Religion and Society to be increased to 0.4 FTE for the period from 1 August 2014 for

a period of three years and her term of appointment as Assistant Principal to be extended until 31 July 2017.

Kevin Collins to be appointed Assistant Principal, Industry Engagement, Industry Funding and Big Data with effect from 1 January 2014 for a period of two years at 0.2 FTE.

Court further noted that Vice-Principal Professor Steve Hillier had intimated his intention to retire in October 2014 and that discussions were underway on how best to recruit to this position, including possibly incorporating Development and Alumni activities as part of the portfolio for the new Vice-Principal.

## **C SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

### **1 REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Comments on the Report of the Central Management Group meeting of 11 November 2013 **Paper C1.1**

Court noted EUSA's improving financial position and welcomed its intention to become a company limited by guarantee. In order to enable this incorporation to proceed, Court approved the request that the University act as guarantor in respect of the Section 75 liability arising from USS. The other items in the report were noted particularly the below inflation rate of increase in student rents and the work of the Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Group (SEAG) which was being taken forward by the recently appointed Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability. Court asked that a separate paper be presented to a future meeting on the strategic direction and thinking being pursued by the Fees Strategy Group.

Report on Other Items

**Paper C1.2**

It was noted that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had endorsed the proposals to sign off the US GAAP Accounts and Court approved the appointment of Professor Monro, Mr Bentley and Dr Masters to a Sub-Group of Court with delegated authority to sign off the US GAAP Accounts on behalf of Court. Court further noted the position in respect of the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) including the on-going negotiations and considerations around the due diligence exercise. It was further confirmed that a Sub-Group had been established by the Finance and General Purposes Committee to take forward matters on its behalf in respect of NPL.

It was noted that the previous issues around ARCHER had now been successfully concluded and Court further noted the update on USS pension and that a clearer position would be available following the actuarial valuation in March 2014. Court further approved the Subsidiary Companies Financial Statements for 2012/2013.

### **2 EUSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Paper C2**

Court noted the items within the EUSA President's Report and the additional information on: developing the strategic plan, the progress towards completing incorporation and the welcomed support of the University, the recent recognition of EUSA's initiatives, and the student wellbeing projects and the success of the School Council pilots.

### **3 RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE YEAR END REPORT**

**Paper C3**

Court noted and approved the Annual Report on the activities of the Risk Management Committee and the positive statement from the Committee that based on these

activities the Committee was of the opinion that the University had satisfactorily managed its key risks during the year ended 31 July 2013. The enhanced information contained in a separate appendix on systems assurances for 2012/2013 was welcomed particularly given the issues previously raised by the Audit Committee around IT security and the new section in the report on risk appetite assurances was also welcomed: this was in line with the revised Risk Policy and Risk Appetite Statement approved by Court in June 2013. The information on the University's procurement practices and the disclosure information in respect of assurances around fraud provided in support of the adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts and the signing of the Letter of Representation were also noted by Court.

**4 RISK MANAGEMENT – POST YEAR END ASSURANCE STATEMENT Paper C4**

Court noted that no new risks required to be drawn to its attention since the completion of the Risk Management Committee's Annual Report which impacted on the ability of Court to approve the University's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2013 or to sign the Letter of Representation.

**5 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT Paper C5**

The Report on the activities of the Audit Committee during 2012/2013 was noted and approved including the opinion of Internal Audit endorsed by the Committee, on the adequacy of the University's control and governance arrangements. Court welcomed the continuing monitoring by the Audit Committee on the actioning of approved recommendations contained within internal audit assignments and the helpful involvement of the Central Management Group in taking this forward.

Assurances were provided to Court on the items highlighted in the External Audit action plan and key accounting adjustments: actions were being taken to comply with the agreed management responses in the action plan including preparation of a summary report on the Holyrood project which would be presented in due course; and the other matter relating to accounting treatment had now been addressed.

The draft minute of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 22 November 2013 was noted.

**6 REPORTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31 July 2013 **Paper C6.1**

Court endorsed the new approach and the preparation of an integrated Annual Report and Accounts and the improved transparency. In particular the new sections on the University's strategy and value model, risks, and social responsibility and sustainability were commended. The very positive financial performance recorded and the achievement of a 15% increase in the value of research applications and 20% increase in the value of research awards during 2012/2013 compared to the previous year was welcomed by Court and the 5% ratio of operating surplus to total income realised in line with the University's target. Assurances were provided on the accounting treatment of hours to be notified staff and revised wording was approved.

Court approved the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2013 subject to the above revision and any further typographical amendments, noting the External Auditor's report and unqualified opinion and authorised the Principal, Vice-Convener of Court and the Director of Finance to sign the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2013 as appropriate on behalf of Court.

Letter of Representation

**Paper C6.2**

Court approved the Letter of Representation and authorised the Principal to sign the Letter on its behalf.

Review of 2012/2013 Outturn versus Forecast

**Paper C6.3**

The principal movements between the quarter three forecast and outturn were noted and Court welcomed the continuing improvements in the forecasting and allocation processes.

**7 2014-2017 DRAFT OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

**Paper C7**

Court endorsed the final Outcome Agreement 2014-2017 and noted that there may be further comments from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC): the current document had been revised from previous drafts to take account of initial comments received from the SFC.

**8 STRATEGIC PLAN: TARGETS AND KPIS PROGRESS REPORT**

**Paper C8**

The progress against each of the agreed targets and KPIS within the Strategic Plan 2012/2016 was noted. There was detailed debate around progress to take forward the annual review of staff and concern was expressed on the lack of significant improvement in this area and on the low proportion in the College of Science and Engineering. Court noted the cultural factors in taking this forward and the difficulties where research staff were employed for limited periods, often for a year or less. Assurances were provided on the guidance, training and support available to staff and on the actions being taken: a paper would be going to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and thereafter to Court on this issue. There was also discussion on progress to take forward the target to increase the proportion of female academic staff appointed to senior positions and on reducing the gender pay gap and while both areas were on track further improvement was required. It was further confirmed that more information would be provided on widening participation data.

**9 ANNUAL REVIEW 2012-2013**

**Paper C9**

Court approved the Annual Review 2012/2013 subject to any further comments received from Court members.

**10 REPORT FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

**Paper C10**

Court noted the confidential Report from the Remuneration Committee and the principal issues discussed by the Committee during the year around, retention and recruitment of senior staff, gender, and the success of the 360° appraisal of the Principal. The separate report from the independent observer was welcomed. There was discussion on out of cycle processes and assurances were provided on the rigorous practices adopted. There was also discussion on other approaches to senior grading and there was confirmation that these sorts of approaches had been previously considered.

**11 REPORT FROM KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**Paper C11**

The Report on the activities of the Knowledge Strategy Committee during the previous year was noted and its oversight of major non-estate projects in respect of IT and IM. and Court approved the minor changes to the Terms and Reference of the Committee to update terminology.

## **D ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL OR NOTE**

### **1 DRAFT RESOLUTIONS Paper D1**

Court approved the following draft Resolutions:

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Draft Resolution No. 2/2014: | Institution of new postgraduate Degree: Master of International Affairs |
| Draft Resolution No. 3/2014: | Payment of Debts to the University                                      |

and requested their transmission to the General Council and Senatus Academicus for observations.

### **2 RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE Paper D2**

Court approved the minor change to the Terms of Reference of the Risk Management Committee.

### **3 DONATIONS AND LEGACIES Paper D3**

Court was pleased to note the donations and legacies to be notified, received by the University of Edinburgh Development Trust between 19 October and 20 November 2013.

### **4 SCHOOL OF INFORMATICS Paper D4**

Court approved the placing of a contract with the preferred supplier as set out in the paper for the agreed purchase price and authorised the Principal or any Vice-Principal to sign the final contract.

### **5 SCHOOL OF CLINICAL SCIENCES Paper D5**

Court approved the placing of a contract with the preferred supplier as set out in the paper for the agreed purchase price and authorised the Principal or any Vice-Principal to sign the final contract.

### **6 SCHOOL OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY Paper D6**

Court approved the commitment as set out in the paper and authorised the Principal or any other member of Court to approve the associated purchase order.

### **7 USE OF THE SEAL**

A record was made available of all the documents executed on behalf of the Court since its last meeting and sealed with its common seal.