



UNIVERSITY COURT

3 November 2014

Minute

Present:

Rector (in chair)
The Principal
Ms D Davidson
Mr A Johnston
Professor A M Smyth
Dr M Aliotta
Professor J Ansell
Professor S Cooper
Dr C Phillips
Dr A Richards, Vice-Convenor
Mr D Bentley
Dr R Black
Dr C Masters
Lady S Rice
Ms A Lamb
Ms B Pegado, President, Students' Representative Council
Ms T Boardman, Vice-President Students' Representative Council

In attendance:

Ms S Beattie-Smith, Rector's Assessor
Senior Vice-Principal Professor C Jeffery
Vice-Principal Professor J Seckl
Vice-Principal Professor S Rigby
Vice-Principal Professor L Yellowlees
University Secretary, Ms S Smith
Mr H Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
Ms M Ayers, Acting Director of Human Resources
Ms L Chalmers, Director of Legal Services
Dr I Conn, Director of Communications, Marketing and External Affairs
Mr G Jebb, Director of Estates and Buildings
Mr P McNaul, 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 Rt Hon D Wilson, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh
Sheriff Principal E Bowen
Mr P Budd
Mr L Matheson

This meeting of Court will be preceded by a presentation on Edinburgh's Clinical Research Facilities delivered by Ms Sharon Cameron, Deputy Director, Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility.

1 Minute **Paper A**

The Minute of the meeting held on 15 September 2014 was approved as a correct record subject to reference being made to the Rector not presiding at item 10: Rectorial Election. A revised Minute would be circulated.

2 Note of Seminar **Paper B**

The Note of the seminar held on 15 September 2014 was approved as a correct record.

3 Principal's Communications **Paper C**

Court noted the content of the Principal's Report and the additional information on: the Truing Institute; progress in developing a revised Socially Responsible Investment Policy and the establishment of a short-life working Group to explore issues around concerns expressed on investment in fossil fuels; the initiation on 6 November 2014 by UCU members of action short of a strike (boycott of assessment and marking) around potential changes to the USS pension scheme; success of recent open days; the opening of the North American Office; the Principal's visit to South Korea; the continuing improvement of the University's ranking in World league tables; major investment in scanning equipment to take forward the work on Lifelong Health and Wellbeing Initiative; and the bid for the multi-million euro project to provide effective healthcare for an ageing population.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4 Student Experience Update **Paper D**

The University's reassuring strong performance in an external survey of postgraduate taught students was noted by Court and the continuing work around enhancing the student experience. This included the discussion and focus at Senate and its Committees on the work required to improve the University's NSS results. The evident support of colleagues for the work to improve performance was welcomed and the visits to Schools across the University by the Principal and senior colleagues were endorsed by Court. The extension of the Personal Tutor scheme to include all taught students was noted and the project to provide similar support for research students. The work of the Institute for Academic Development was also noted in supporting staff and the recent IAD Insights publication.

Court recognised the increasing demands on colleagues in taking forward the various initiatives and further consideration would be given on providing support and streamlining processes. Court also recognised the importance of robust communications and informing students of the enhancements actioned as a result of the various

projects and surveys.

5 SRUC Strategic Alignment - update **Paper E**

It was noted that the current focus of discussions with SRUC continued to be around proposed governance structures and it was anticipated that the due diligence exercise would commence shortly. There had been preliminary exploration around the estate and pension issues and it was noted that SRUC was currently undertaking a review of its estates. Court noted the complex nature of SRUC and re-affirmed the importance of a robust due diligence exercise noting the potential implications on the current timetable. As previously reported the next meeting of the SRUC Court Sub-Group would be held on 12 November 2014 when an update on progress would be provided.

6 Outcome Agreement - 2015 Cycle and Draft Self-Evaluation of 2013-14 Agreement **Paper F**

Court reviewed and approved the self-evaluation of the 2013/2014 Outcome Agreement which would now be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The University's strong performance in the areas of research and commercialisation was particularly noted and welcomed and Court further welcomed progress on widening participation.

The timetable to take forward the development of the 2015 Outcome Agreement was noted by Court and that a draft document would be available at the next meeting of Court for consideration with the final documented submitted to the SFC at the end of February 2015. The priority areas for the 2015 cycle were also noted.

7 Draft Corporate Governance Statement **Paper G**

The draft governance statement to be included in the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2014 was considered and approved subject to any further comments being received. Court noted the inclusion this year of biographical information on members of Court and that consideration was still being given to the format and possible inclusion of links to information on the University's website.

8 Edinburgh at the forefront of the genomics revolution **Paper H**

Court considered the proposal and approved capital investment to purchase this system. The robust business case was noted and that this investment would provide significant opportunities for research income, scientific discovery, and improved health and industrial collaboration.

ROUTINE ITEMS

9 EUSA President's report

Paper I

Court noted the items within the EUSA President's Report and the additional information on: the current issues around student accommodation on the south side of the city; the first Edinburgh Student Arts Festival (ESAF) taking place in February 2015; the EUSA impact report; and the Edinburgh award.

10 Audit and Risk Committee Report

Paper J

The report from the first meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee was noted. In particular, the Convener of the Committee reported on the successful recruitment process to appoint new external members to the Committee and the suspected fraud cases which were being closely monitored by the Committee and the Central Management Group to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures were in place and operating effectively.

11 Policy and Resources Committee Report

Paper K

The report from the first meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee was noted. The Convener of the Committee reported on the discussions around the BioQuarter Commercialisation Team, the approval of new HR policies and procedures and the useful information attached in appendix 1 on the analytical review summary of the University Management Accounts for the year 2013/2014. Court further approved that the University enter into a 15 year Nominations Agreement to provide student accommodation on the recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee.

12 Nominations Committee Report

Paper L

Court noted the report and on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee approved the following:

Membership of Audit and Risk Committee

Mr Bindesh Savjani to be appointed external member with immediate effect until 2 November 2017.

Mr James Bishop to be appointed external member with effect from 1 February 2015 until 31 January 2018.

Committee of University Benefactors

The Lord Provost's term of office to be extended until he demits office from current membership of Court in 2017.

Professor Jake Ansell's term of office to be extended to 31 July 2016.

Policy and Resources Committee

Ms Doreen Davidson to be appointed with effect from 1 January 2015 until 31 July 2017.

Scrutinising Committee – Rectorial Election 2015

Dr Claire Phillips, Ms Janet Philip and Ms Briana Pegado to appointed members of the Scrutinising Committee in respect of the 2015 election.

SBS Trustees

Mr Richard Davidson to be appointed as an SBS Trustee with effect from 1 January 2015 until 31 December 2017.

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

13 Academic Report **Paper M**

Court noted the report.

14 North American Office Bank Account **Paper N**

Court approved the banking arrangements in respect of the North American Office.

15 Resolutions **Paper O**

Court approved the following Resolutions:

Resolution No. 51/2014: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Psychiatry

Resolution No. 52/2014: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Gynaecology and Reproductive Sciences

Resolution No. 53/2014: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Astrophysics

Resolution No. 54/2014: Alteration of the title of the Personal Chair of Adaptive Learning Environments

16 Donations and Legacies **Paper P**

Court noted the donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 28 August to 17 October 2014.

17 Uses 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.

18 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of Court will be held on Monday, 8 December 2014 at 2.00pm in LLC, 50 George Square.