



UNIVERSITY COURT

11 May 2015

Minute

- Present:** Mr Steve Morrison Rector (in chair)  
The Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea  
Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen  
Ms Doreen Davidson  
Mr Alan Johnston  
Professor Ann M Smyth  
Dr Claire Phillips  
Dr Anne Richards, Vice-Convener  
Mr David Bentley  
Dr Robert Black  
Mr Peter Budd  
Mr Les Matheson  
Lady Susan Rice  
Ms Angi Lamb  
Ms Briana Pegado, President, Students' Representative Council  
Ms Tasha Boardman, Vice-President Students' Representative Council
- In attendance:** Mr Sandy Ross, Rector's Assessor  
Ms Urte Macikene, EUSA Vice-President Services elect (for presentation and item 1 only)  
Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery  
Vice-Principal Professor Dorothy Miell  
University Secretary, Ms Sarah Smith  
Mr Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services  
Mr Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer  
Ms Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services  
Mr Gavin Douglas, Deputy Director, Student Experience  
Mr Gary Jebb, Director of Estates  
Ms Zoe Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources  
Mr Philip McNaull, Director of Finance  
Mrs Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning  
Ms Fiona Boyd, Head of Stakeholder Relations and Senior Executive Officer  
Mr David Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (for item 8 only)  
Dr Katherine Novosel, Head of Court Services
- Apologies:** The Rt Hon Donald Wilson, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh  
Dr Marialuisa Aliotta  
Professor Sarah Cooper  
Dr Chris Masters  
Professor Jake Ansell

This meeting of Court was preceded by a presentation from Professor James Smith, Vice-Principal International on Internationalisation - the next steps.

## **1 Minute**

**Paper A**

The Minute of the previous meeting held on 9 February 2015 was approved as a correct record.

Dr Anne Richards, Vice-Convener of Court, warmly welcomed Mr Steve Morrison, Rector to this his first meeting of Court following his election in February 2015. Mr Morrison thanked the Vice-Convener and intimated how much he was looking forward to working with colleagues on Court and across the University.

Court members also welcomed Mr Sandy Ross, Rector's Assessor and Ms Urte Macikene, EUSA Vice-President Services elect: Ms Macikene and Mr Jonny Ross-Tatam EUSA President elect would be joining Court as members with effect from 8 June 2015.

Court further noted that this would be the last meeting to be attended by Ms Briana Pegado EUSA President, Ms Tasha Boardman, EUSA Vice-President Services and Mr Les Matheson. Members recorded their thanks for their commitment to the University, specifically in respect of their work on Court, and wished them well for the future.

## **2 Note of Seminar**

**Paper B**

Court approved the Note of the seminar and welcomed the circulation of information on the Strategic Vision 2025 to the University community: the published document was tabled at the meeting.

## **3 Principal's Communications**

**Paper C**

Court noted the contents of the Principal's Report and the additional information on: the success of recent international events in India; the current satisfactory position in respect of applications for the 2015/2016 academic year; the University's approach to the implications of the reduction in SFC funding; developments and opportunities in South America and the focus of University activities now being in the office in Santiago, Chile with network offices in Brazil and Mexico; the various initiatives taken forward during the Principal's sabbatical particularly around on-line learning and MOOCs; the progress and interest in The Alan Turing Institute; the UK election results and issues around the EU and possible referendum; interactions with the Scottish Government; the recruitment underway for the extended role of Vice-Principal, Student Experience, Teaching and Learning; concern around the funding of the EU's Horizon 2020; USS consultation and the next steps; the success of the EUSA Teaching Awards; and the lessons to be learnt from the meeting on UniversCities in Geneva.

#### **4 Vice-Principal and Assistant Principal designations**

**Paper D**

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

Professor Chris Breward - Principal Edinburgh College of Art and Vice-Principal Creative Industries & Performing Arts term of appointment extended until 31 July 2019.

Professor Charlie Jeffery - Senior Vice-Principal term of appointment extended until 30 September 2017.

Professor Jonathan Seckl - Vice-Principal Planning, Resources and Research Policy term of appointment extended until 31 July 2018.

Professor Lesley Yellowlees - Vice-Principal and Head of College Science and Engineering term of appointment extended until 31 July 2017.

Dr Tina Harrison - Assistant Principal Academic Standards & Quality Assurance term of appointment extended until 31 July 2018.

#### **5 Assistant Principals adjustments**

**Paper E**

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

The term of office of Professor Ian Pirie as Assistant Principal Learning Developments to be extended until 31 December 2015 on a revised basis.

### **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

#### **6 Business Planning Cycle**

**Paper F**

Court noted and endorsed the approach being taken forward in response to the changes in the funding environment and the proposals around College budgets for 2015/2016 which had also been supported by the Policy and Resources Committee. The University was in a strong long-term financial position with robust financial and corporate management processes in place and Court was supportive of strategic investment and the aim to invest and grow during this current challenging period.

Court further noted that, based around the current proposals and taking forward around half of the strategic bids submitted, a surplus of around £10m - £12m (1.3% of turnover) would be achieved in 2015/2016. Finalised plans based on this approach would be presented to the next meeting of Court for approval. It was confirmed that the University would aim to grow income to substitute for the

recent SFC cut, returning to return to a 3-4% surplus and there was flexibility and options available to the University.

## **7 SRUC - update**

**Paper G**

The current position in taking forward discussions around a strategic alliance with SRUC was noted; a detailed business plan was being prepared and work continued to progress on the due diligence exercise. Court further noted the actions being pursued by the SRUC Board and in particular the various property options being considered. There was engagement between the two institutions at different levels and a helpful informal meeting had now taken place between the Court and SRUC Board Sub-Groups. Court further noted the issues where clarification was still being sought. It was the intention to bring a number of papers to the next meeting of Court covering a range of matters to take discussions forward to the next stage. Court thanked all these involved in this project particularly Mr Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services.

## **8 Report of the Fossil Fuels Review Group**

**Paper H**

It was noted that this University was the first in Europe to sign the UN Principles of Responsible Investment following agreement by Court in December 2012. During 2014 there had been a wide-ranging consultation which included staff and students around taking this forward and particularly the drafting of a new Responsible Investment Policy Statement. As part of this process EUSA had presented concerns around investment in fossil fuels and the University's Central Management Group (CMG) had established a short life working group to consider this issue.

The Fossil Fuels Review Group had been established following the CMG meeting of 8 October 2014 and had met on 6 occasions. Court welcomed that it had adopted an evidence-based approach in taking forward concerns on investment in fossil fuels and had considered information provided against the criteria agreed by CMG. The Court further welcomed the membership of the Group with representation from across the University community including EUSA and that the Group had obtained information from all positions in the debate.

The Review Group had now concluded its deliberations and its Report had been considered by the CMG on 14 April 2015. Court noted the discussions from that CMG meeting and welcomed the balanced Report from the Review Group on this very complex issue. Court considered the recommendations of the Review Group and approved options 2, 3, 4, and 5. Court also recommended that we now take steps to implement the changes and further approved the additional recommendations listed at the end of the report. It was noted that the Court's decision would be appropriately communicated across the University and that given the level of media interest a press conference had been arranged for 12 May: the decision of Court

should remain strictly confidential until after the announcement on Tuesday.

Court thanked all those involved in this complex matter and in particular the Senior Vice-Principal for his chairing of the Review Group.

**9 Court and Committee Cycle**

**Paper I**

Court approved the proposals to enhance the current Court and Committee cycle and that commencing at the start of 2015/2016, five Court meetings would be held in September, December, February, April and June to meet the business needs of the University. It was noted that revised meeting dates would be circulated as soon as practicable.

**10 Court Effectiveness Review**

**Paper J**

The Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance requires governing bodies to conduct an annual review of its effectiveness. Court approved the proposals as set out in the paper which included a survey of the views of Court members and an exercise to determine compliance with the Scottish Code and the Court's Statement of Primary Responsibilities. Further proposals would be presented in due course on the process to undertake an externally facilitated review during 2015/2016.

**11 Consultation on Higher Education Governance Bill - update**

**Paper K**

Court noted the conclusion of the consultation and the key points recorded in the analysis of the written responses published by the Scottish Government on proposed new legislation on the governance of Scottish universities. There continued to be discussion with the Scottish Government on the proposed legislation and the various areas of concern within the higher education sector. Court further noted the commitment by the Scottish chairs to achieve a minimum of 40% of men and of women among independent members of governing bodies.

**ROUTINE ITEMS**

**12 EUSA President's Report**

**Paper L**

Court noted the items within the EUSA President's Report and the additional information on: work on a financial plan for EUSA; and the awards achieved at the NUS Scotland Awards.

**13 Policy and Resources Committee Report**

**Paper M**

Court noted the report and on the recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee approved the purchase of property on Riego

Street, the proposed investment of cash reserves and the recapitalisation of Old College Capital.

**14 Knowledge Strategy Committee Report** **Paper N**

It was noted that there had been three outstanding presentations at the last meeting of the Knowledge Strategy Committee which would be followed up at future meetings. Court welcomed the issues being taken forward by this Committee particularly in relation to IT security and a Research IT Services Strategy.

**15 Exception Committee Report** **Paper O**

The items approved by the Exception Committee on behalf of Court were noted.

**16 Audit and Risk Committee Report** **Paper P**

Court noted the report and approved the revised accounting policies as a result of FRS102.

**17 Nominations Committee Report** **Paper Q**

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

Mr Alan Johnston to be appointed Co-opted member of Court with effect from 1 August 2015 until 31 July 2018.

Ms Alison Grant to be appointed as soon as possible as a Co-opted member on a date yet to be confirmed until 31 July 2018.

*Post meeting note: It has been confirmed that Ms Grant is able to join Court with effect from 1 June 2015.*

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

**18 Court Membership** **Paper R**

Court noted the following new members:

General Council Assessors: Dr Alan Brown and Mr Ritchie Walker joining Court with effect from 1 August 2015.

EUSA representatives: Mr Jonny Ross-Tatam EUSA President elect and Ms Urte Macikene EUSA Vice-President Services elect joining Court with effect from 8 June 2015.

The Rector had also appointed Mr Sandy Ross as his Assessor with immediate effect.

**19 Academic Report** **Paper S**

Court noted the Academic Report.

**20 Draft Resolutions** **Paper T**

Court approved the following draft Resolutions:

Draft Resolution No.18/2015: Board of Studies

Draft Resolution No.19/2015: Code of Student Conduct

Draft Resolution No.20/2015: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations

Draft Resolution No.21/2015: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations

Draft Resolution No.22/2015: Postgraduate degree of Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (DClinDent)

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

**21 Constitution of the Scottish Consortium for Rural Research** **Paper U**

On the recommendation of the Board of the Scottish Consortium for Rural Research (SCRR), Court approved the revised constitution of SCRR.

**22 Laigh Year Regulations** **Paper V**

Court approved the revised Laigh Year Regulations with effect from 8 June 2015 and noted that approval would now be sought from Senate.

**23 Donations and Legacies** **Paper W**

Court noted the donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 22 January to 23 April 2015.

**24 Request for Delegation of Authority for equipment purchase** **Paper X**

Court approved the request for purchasing authority and delegated authority to Vice-Principal Professor Sir John Savill to finalise the details of the purchase and sign off any required documentation.

**25 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.

**26 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of Court will be held on Monday, 22 June 2015 at 2.00 pm in the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, Easter Bush.