



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

UNIVERSITY COURT

26 September 2016

Minute

- Present:** Mr Steve Morrison, Rector (in chair)
The Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea
Ms Anne Richards, Vice-Convener
Ms Doreen Davidson
Dr Alan Brown
Mr Ritchie Walker
Professor Sarah Cooper
Dr Claire Phillips
Professor Elizabeth Bomberg
Professor Alexander Tudhope
Ms Angi Lamb
Dr Chris Masters
Mr David Bentley
Dr Robert Black
Mr Alan Johnston
Lady Susan Rice
Ms Alison Grant
Mr Alec Edgecliffe-Johnson, President, Students' Association
Ms Jenna Kelly, Vice-President, Students' Association
- In attendance:** Mr Sandy Ross, Rector's Assessor
University Secretary, Ms Sarah Smith
Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery
Vice-Principal Professor Dorothy Miell
Vice-Principal Professor Lesley Yellowlees
Vice-Principal Professor Sir John Savill (from Item 12)
Vice-Principal Professor Jonathan Seckl
Mr Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
Mr Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University
Ms Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
Mr Phil McNaull, Director of Finance
Ms Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services
Mr Gary Jebb, Director of Estates
Dr Ian Conn, Director of Communications and Marketing
Ms Zoe Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources
Mr Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary, Student Experience
Ms Fiona Boyd, Head of Stakeholder Relations
Ms Kirstie Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services
Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services
- Apologies:** Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen
The Rt Hon Donald Wilson, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh
Mr Peter Budd

- 1 Minute** **Paper A**
- The Minute of the meeting held on 20 June 2016 was approved.
- Court welcomed Senate Assessors Professor Elizabeth Bomberg and Professor Alexander Tudhope to their first meeting as members.
- 2 Matters Arising** **Verbal**
- There were no matters arising.
- 3 Principal's Communications** **Paper B**
- Court noted the content of the Principal's report and the additional information on: the welcome ceremony for new students held in the Festival Theatre on 12 September and a successful Welcome Week for 6,000 new undergraduates and 6,500 new postgraduates, including 1,000 online students; the undergraduate open day held on 24 September with approximately 7,000 prospective students visiting and 12,000 visitors in total; engagement with Scottish and UK ministers following the EU Referendum vote and an internal focus on the student experience, considered later in the agenda.
- 4 Policy & Resources Committee Report** **Paper C**
- Key items considered by the Policy & Resources Committee were summarised.
- SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**
- 5 EU Referendum: Seminar Outcome and Sub-Group Report** **Paper D**
- Key points considered at the Court EU Referendum Seminar and the report from the Court EU Referendum Sub-Group were reviewed.
- 6 Horizon 2020 COFUND application** **Paper W**
- A proposed application to the European Union's Horizon 2020 COFUND scheme to part-fund a cohort of 25 international postdoctoral collaborative research fellows was considered.
- Noting that: the scheme is complementary to the existing Chancellor's Fellows scheme; is open to researchers from EU and non-EU countries aside from the UK; there may be opportunities for Heads of Schools to extend appointments if additional funding is available; and, that the funding requested is denominated in euros and will not vary with exchange rate fluctuations, the grant submission and associated University funding was approved.

7 Lecture Capture Business Case

Paper F

The business case for investment in a University-wide lecture capture system was reviewed following endorsement by Knowledge Strategy Committee and the Senate Learning & Teaching Committee.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Many other peer universities have already installed a comprehensive lecture capture system, this has helped the technology to mature and will allow the University to learn from early adopters;
- Expect generally high support from academic staff for lecture capture provided that there is clear communication well in advance of installation including addressing any concerns over ease of use and copyright of images;
- Subtitling is not included in the current proposal but as technology improves it may be added at a later date;
- Prioritisation of projects and other areas that could be addressed to improve the student experience, including streamlining Virtual Learning Environments and improving the student (and staff) digital experience more widely.

The business case and estimated implementation cost was approved.

8 EUSA President's Report

Paper G

The EUSA President reported on activities since the last meeting including a positive result from the 2016 Festival operations, a pause on the King's Building redevelopment to allow for a new tendering exercise to keep within the planned budget, the publication of the 2015-16 EUSA Impact Report and the launch of the 'No One Asks for It' anti-sexual harassment campaign. Progress with the external mentoring pilot for History students was raised, with the ambition to extend the scheme following a successful pilot.

9 EUSA Democracy Regulations

Paper N

Proposed revisions to the EUSA Democracy Regulations to enact certain changes supported by a student referendum in March 2016 were considered. Members discussed the changes to:

- Establish a campus-wide online ballot system for contentious issues at Student Council (those that receive more than 33% but fewer than 67% votes in favour);
- Introduce a paid Student Council Facilitator to chair all meetings of Student Council;
- Establish that an elected representative's vote counts for 1.5 votes at Student Council, compared to 1 for a vote from an unelected student.

Noting that the language used in the revised Regulations mirrors the language used in the student referendum, the revised Democracy Regulations were approved subject to a review in twelve months.

10 Finance Director's Update

Paper H

Draft (unaudited) financial results for 2015/16 and changes to the presentation of financial results under the new Financial Reporting Standard (FRS 102) were discussed, with a summary explanation of the key changes to be included in the 2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts. The Ten Year Forecast updated to include the August 2016 Estates Capital Plan was received, with Estates Committee to review proposals to prioritise planned projects.

11 Rest of UK (RUK) Tuition Fees

Paper I

A proposal to set the tuition fee for undergraduate RUK students in 2017/18 at £9,250 for new students and £9,000 for continuing students with a corresponding increase in the bursary level available to new students was considered. Cost increases in the higher education sector, views of the student representatives, the expectations of fee increases amongst continuing students, the importance of clearly communicating decisions and the potential for future tuition fees to rise with inflation was discussed and noted.

Court voted by a show of hands on the following proposals:

- 1) The tuition fee for continuing RUK undergraduate students in 2017/18 will be set at £9,000 – approved unanimously;
- 2) If the tuition fee for new RUK undergraduate students in 2017/18 is set at £9,250, the bursary support available to individual students at the University should be increased proportionally – approved unanimously;
- 3) The tuition fee for new RUK undergraduate students in 2017/18 will be set at £9,250 – approved by a clear majority.

12 National Student Survey 2016

Paper E

The results of the National Student Survey 2016, proposed actions and further issues for consideration were reviewed. It was noted that the 2016 results were deeply disappointing, with the headline overall satisfaction measure falling from 84% in 2015 to 80% in 2016 and a relative weakening in the University's position relative to peer institutions.

The Heads of College commented on School-level results and initiatives to improve the student experience, including seeking to build a sense of community and belonging across the campuses.

Court discussed opportunities for immediate improvements in the student experience alongside longer term initiatives, creating a feeling of inclusion in the undergraduate student body, and learning from other universities, including in the United States.

It was suggested that a seminar on the student experience be scheduled for the morning of the December Court meeting, to allow for further discussion and interaction with invited staff and students in the Colleges. Court members were encouraged to submit any suggestions or further comments to the University Secretary in the interim.

The recommendations set out in the paper were approved, with a progress update to be provided at the December meeting.

13 Outcome Agreement Self-Evaluation Report **Paper J**

Court delegated authority for finalisation and submission of the 2015-16 Outcome Agreement Self-Evaluation Report to the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning.

14 Student Accommodation lease **Paper K**

A 20 year lease agreement for a 583 bed space student accommodation building at the New Waverley site was approved, with the Agreement to Lease and Lease documentation to be prepared in line with the Heads of Terms and concluded ahead of a construction start on site.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

15 Social Impact Pledge **Paper L**

Participation in the Scottish Government's Social Impact Pledge and proposals for the first three pledges to be implemented in 2016-17 was approved.

16 Institutional Climate Change Strategy **Paper M**

The University's Climate Change Strategy 2016-26, approved by Central Management Group, was noted.

17 Heads of School Appointment Process **Paper O**

A revised process, job description and person specification for the appointment of Heads of School was approved.

18 Annual Review Completion Rates **Paper P**

The completion rates for staff Annual Reviews in 2015-16 were noted.

19 Annual Quality Assurance Report to Scottish Funding Council **Paper Q**

Court approved the Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institutional-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2015-16 and authorised the Vice-Convener to sign the accompanying statement.

20 Court Survey and Effectiveness Review **Paper R**

The 2015-16 annual review of effectiveness of Court was approved.

21 Development Trust President **Paper S**

On the recommendation of the management trustees, Court approved the appointment of Mr Steve Thomson as the new President of the Development Trust.

22 Committee Reports **Paper T1**

- **Exception Committee**

The following matter approved by the Exception Committee on behalf of Court was noted.

Proposed acquisition of former Lauriston Place Fire Station
Submission of an unconditional offer for the strategic acquisition of the former Lauriston Place Fire Station and Museum by the closing date of 1 September 2016 was approved.

- **Nominations Committee** **Paper T2**

Court noted the report.

- **Audit & Risk Committee** **Paper T3**

Court approved the Internal Audit Strategy 2016/17-2020/21 and the External Audit Fee for 2015-16, as recommended by Audit & Risk Committee.

- **Knowledge Strategy Committee** **Paper T4**

Court noted the report.

23 Resolutions **Paper U**

The following resolutions were approved:

- Resolution No. 52/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Business and Sustainable Development
- Resolution No. 53/2016: Foundation of a Chair of Accountancy
- Resolution No. 54/2016: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Cultural Relations
- Resolution No. 55/2016: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Medical Statistics
- Resolution No. 56/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Black Studies
- Resolution No. 57/2016: Foundation of a Chair of Avian Biology
- Resolution No. 58/2016: Foundation of a Chair of Power Electronics
- Resolution No. 59/2016: Foundation of a Chair of Integrated Sensor Technology

24 Donations and Legacies **Paper V**

Donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 26 May 2016 to 31 August 2016 were noted.

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 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

27 Date of next meeting

Monday, 5 December 2016, 2-5pm.