



**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**25 September 2017**

**Minute**

- Present:** Mr Steve Morrison, Rector (in chair)  
The Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea  
Ms Anne Richards, Vice-Convener  
Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen  
The Rt Hon Frank Ross, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh  
Dr Alan Brown  
Ms Doreen Davidson  
Professor Elizabeth Bomberg  
Professor Sarah Cooper  
Dr Claire Phillips  
Professor Alexander Tudhope  
Ms Jo Craiglee  
Dr Frank Armstrong  
Mr David Bentley  
Dr Robert Black  
Ms Perdita Fraser  
Ms Alison Grant  
Mr Alan Johnston  
Lady Susan Rice  
Mr Patrick Kilduff, President, Students' Association  
Ms Esther Dominy, Vice-President, Students' Association
- In attendance:** Mr Sandy Ross, Rector's Assessor  
University Secretary, Ms Sarah Smith  
Senior Vice-Principal Charlie Jeffery  
Professor David Argyle (for Item 6)  
Vice-Principal Professor Dorothy Miell (for Item 6)  
Vice-Principal Professor David Robertson (for Item 6)  
Vice-Principal Professor Jonathan Seckl  
Mr Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University  
Mr Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services  
Mr Phil McNaul, Director of Finance  
Ms Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services  
Mr Gary Jebb, Director of Estates  
Ms Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning  
Mr Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary, Student Experience  
Ms Zoe Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources  
Mr Rob Tomlinson, Acting Director of Communications and Marketing  
Ms Fiona Boyd, Head of Stakeholder Relations  
Ms Kirstie Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services  
Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services
- Apologies:** Mr Ritchie Walker

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|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                 | <b>Minute</b>  | <b>Paper A</b>             |
|                          | <p>The Minute of the meeting held on 19 June 2017 was approved.</p> <p>Court welcomed Ms Perdita Fraser, Dr Frank Armstrong and Ms Jo Craiglee to their first meeting as Court members.</p>  |                            |
| <b>2</b>                 | <b>Matters Arising</b>   | <b>Verbal</b>              |
|                          | <p>The Director of Estates provided an update on measures taken to review and enhance project management capacity in the Estates Directorate.</p>  |                            |
| <b>3</b>                 | <b>Principal's Communications</b>  | <b>Paper B</b>             |
|                          | <p>Court noted the content of the Principal's report and the additional information on: success for the men's and women's rugby teams at the Scottish Varsity Matches on 23 September, a record year for research awards in 2016/17 with £364.5 million in new awards made, and recent political debate regarding tuition fees and student loans for English-domiciled undergraduate students.</p> <p>The Rector noted an opportunity to bid to participate in the Arts &amp; Humanities Research Council's Creative Industries Clusters Programme.</p>                                |                            |
| <b>4</b>                 | <b>Vice-Principal and Assistant Principal Extensions</b>   | <b>Paper C</b>             |
|                          | <p>Extensions of terms of office of Vice-Principals and Assistant Principals were approved as set out in the paper.</p>  |                            |
| <b>5</b>                 | <b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee Report</b>   | <b>Paper D</b>             |
|                          | <p>Key items considered by the Policy &amp; Resources Committee were summarised, including a financial benchmarking report and student recruitment update. The Vice-Convenor noted that consideration would be given to improving future reporting to Court of comparative analyses with peer group institutions conducted at committee-level.</p>   |                            |
| <b>SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS</b> |  |                            |
| <b>6</b>                 | <b>National Student Survey 2017 and Annual Scottish Funding Council Quality Assurance Report</b>   | <b>Paper E<br/>Paper L</b> |
|                          | <p>The results of the National Student Survey 2017, analysis, proposed actions and further issues for consideration were reviewed alongside the University's annual report to the Scottish Funding Council on institution-led review and enhancement activity.</p> <p>The improvement in the National Student Survey overall satisfaction measure, from 80% in 2016 to 83% in 2017 and relative improvement in the University's position relative to peer institutions was welcomed but it was noted that results remain significantly below those the University aspires towards.</p> |                            |

The Heads of College commented on variations in results at School and degree course level, disseminating best practice and improving student spaces across the University's campuses.

The National Student Survey follow-up actions proposed in Paper E were endorsed. The annual quality assurance report in Paper L was endorsed and the Vice-Convener authorised to sign the accompanying statement.

## **7 City Deal**

**Paper F**

Following the Court Seminar briefing and discussion, Court agreed to delegate authority to the City Deal Executive Governance Group to authorise:

- i) expenditure of pump priming activities. This would be limited to the Principal's current delegated authority level of up to £2M per approval and capped at a total approval of £6M; and,
- ii) changes in the source of funding for City Deal capital projects where Court approval had previously been granted.

## **8 Finance Director's Report**

**Paper G**

The draft University Group 2016/17 financial results and the latest iteration of the Ten Year Forecast and associated key performance indicators were noted. Members requested an overlay of the Ten Year Forecast illustrating the forecast impact of the City Deal and discussed communication of the Annual Report and Accounts, including the importance of realising resource to support reinvestment in priority areas for the benefit of the University community.

## **9 Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016**

**Paper H**

The University Secretary introduced proposals developed by Nominations Committee to revise the composition of Court to enable compliance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

Members discussed the merits of a small increase in the size of Court from 22 to 23 members, attracting suitably experienced candidates for the Senior Lay Member role, and the importance of collective Court decision-making for the long term interest of the University as a whole. The proposals were welcomed and Court approved:

- a revised composition of Court as recommended by Nominations Committee, to take full effect in summer 2020;
- transitional arrangements prior to full implementation in summer 2020; and,
- the widening of the existing Ordinance on Removal of Co-opted Members of Court to apply to all Court members on an equal basis.

## **10 Annual Court Effectiveness Review**

**Paper I**

The annual Court effectiveness review 2016/17 was approved.

## **11 Rectorial Election 2018**

**Paper J**

*The Rector declared a potential conflict of interest and withdrew from presiding, discussion and decision-making. The Vice-Convener presided for the item.*

Proposed arrangements for the Rectorial Election 2018 were considered. Court agreed an election date of 26-27 February 2018 and the appointment of Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen as the Returning Officer and Ms Tracey Slaven as the Deputy Returning Officer. It was agreed that the draft election regulations would be subject to further consultation with student and staff representatives as to whether and how to provide an option to re-open nominations. Subsequently, the draft election regulations will be submitted to Exception Committee for approval.

## **12 EUSA President's Report**

**Paper K**

The Student President reported on activities since the last meeting and planned future events.

### **ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

## **13 Annual Scottish Funding Council Quality Assurance Report**

**Paper L**

*Secretary's note: this was considered within Item 6 above.*

## **14 Annual Review Completion Rates**

**Paper M**

The 96.5% completion rate for staff annual reviews in 2016/17 was welcomed.

## **15 Committee Reports**

### **• Exception Committee**

**Paper N1**

The following matters approved by the Exception Committee on behalf of Court were noted:

- City Deal: acceptance of capital investment from the UK Government as part of an Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal and to permit discussions between the University, City Deal partners and the UK and Scottish Governments on the details of the proposed deal and the underpinning outline business cases for the data driven innovation strand.
- Life Assurance Cover: establishment of a Registered Group Life Scheme and the associated Trust Deed to provide life cover for former Edinburgh Research and Innovation employees who have transferred to the University through TUPE arrangements.
- Head of College Extension: extension of the term of office for Professor Dorothy Miell as Head of College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences to 31 July 2021.

- **Nominations Committee**

**Paper N2**

Court noted the report and approved the appointment of the Lord Provost to the Committee on University Benefactors for a three year term of office to 31 July 2020.

- **Audit & Risk Committee**

**Verbal**

The Convener of Audit & Risk Committee provided a verbal report on the 19 September meeting.

## **16 Resolutions**

**Paper O**

The following resolutions were approved:

Resolution No. 69/2017: Foundation of a Personal Chair of International Law and Global Governance

Resolution No. 70/2017: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Sociology and Social Policy

Resolution No. 71/2017: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Social Work

Resolution No. 72/2017: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Innovation in the Life Sciences

Resolution No. 73/2017: Foundation of a Chair of Tropical Agriculture and Sustainable Development

Resolution No. 74/2017: Foundation of a Chair of Africa and International Development

Resolution No. 75/2017: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Digital Cultural Heritage

## **17 Donations and Legacies**

**Paper P**

Donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 1 June 2017 to 31 August 2017 were noted.

## **18 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.

## **19 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **20 Dates of 2018/19 Meetings**

**Paper Q**

The following meeting dates for the 2018/19 academic year were approved:

- Monday 1 October 2018
- Monday 3 December 2018
- Monday 29 April 2019
- Monday 17 June 2019

A suitable meeting date in February 2019 will be identified and submitted

for approval at the next meeting.

**21 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 4 December 2017, 2-5pm