



**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**4 December 2017**

**Minute**

- Present:** Mr Steve Morrison, Rector (in chair)  
The Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea  
Ms Anne Richards, Vice-Convenor  
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  
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  
Professor David Argyle, Acting Head of the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine  
Vice-Principal Professor Jonathan Seckl  
Mr Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University  
Mr Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services  
Mr Phil McNaull, 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  
Lady Susan Rice

September 2017 was approved.

## **2 Matters Arising**

**Verbal**

The Rector and the Vice-Convener congratulated the Principal on his receipt of the 2017 City of Edinburgh Award and noting that this is the Principal's final Court meeting before demitting office in January, formally recorded Court's thanks for his exceptional service to the University and wider community.

## **3 Principal's Communications**

**Paper B**

Court noted the content of the Principal's report and the additional information on: the University's Christmas carol service held at St Giles' Cathedral; the Senior Vice-Principal's visit to India in a Universities Scotland delegation with the Deputy First Minister; a £10M capital donation by an anonymous benefactor for the Edinburgh Futures Institute at Quartermile; the award of the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher Education for work led by Professors Jane Norman and Hilary Critchley to improve women's health; and UK sector discussions on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS).

Court discussed local and national communications of USS proposals and an associated University & College Union UK-wide ballot on possible strike action or action short of a strike.

## **4 Policy & Resources Committee Report**

**Paper C**

Key items considered by the Policy & Resources Committee were summarised, including three Social Impact pledges approved for 2017/18 (Homeless Health and Inclusion Centre; Digital Ambassadors; Student Social Enterprise) and an update on industry strategy, with Dr Frank Armstrong joining the Committee's Commercialisation Sub-Group.

## **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

## **5 Student Experience Update**

**Paper D**

The Deputy Secretary, Student Experience, presented the first iteration of a new metrics-based report and accompanying commentary.

Members discussed: active assistance for selected Schools with lower performing student experience measures; the potential for new technology to assist oversight of individual student progress and offer targeted support, with a Learning Analytics Policy in development in consultation with student representatives; the importance of cultural and leadership factors within Schools; regular communication with students on actions taken; and enhancing recreational sport opportunities.

It was noted that future reports would continue to include broader updates beyond metric-based measures and include College-specific reports on a rotating basis.

- 6 Strategic Planning**
- **Strategic Plan 2012-16: Final Progress Report** **Paper E1**
- Targets and key performance indicators which did not have final data available in December 2016 were reviewed alongside a summary of all Strategic Plan 2012-16 measures. It was agreed that the University has broadly achieved the targets and key performance indicators set out in the Strategic Plan 2012-16.
- **Strategic Plan 2016: Performance Measurement Framework** **Paper E2**
- The first annual progress report using the Performance Measurement Framework for the Strategic Plan 2016 was reviewed. Gender balance at staff grades 9 and 10, staff age profiles, including ethnicity/race measures, the proportion of academic staff from other EU member states and growth in staff numbers relative to student numbers were discussed. It was agreed that the University is broadly on track to deliver against the Strategic Plan 2016.
- 7 Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report** **Paper F**
- The Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee presented the Annual Report to Court. Active oversight by the Committee and by the Risk Management Committee of mitigating actions in response to the UK's planned exit from the European Union was welcomed and it was agreed that the report provides reasonable assurance that the University's internal control environment in 2016/17 was sufficiently adequate to allow approval of the Annual Report and Accounts.
- 8 Risk Management Post Year End Assurance Statement** **Paper G**
- It was noted that no significant new events or material issues since the year end of 31 July 2017 that could impact on the ability of Court to approve the Annual Report and Accounts had been reported.
- 9 Finance**
- **Finance Director's Report** **Paper H1**
- The report, containing an analytical review of year-on-year movements in the income and expenditure account, was noted.
- **Annual Report and Accounts 2016/17** **Paper H2**
- Following scrutiny by the Audit & Risk Committee and the Policy & Resources Committee, the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2017 were presented for approval. It was noted that the Strategic Plan progress overview page had been updated and agreed with the Convener of Audit & Risk Committee. The sector-leading integrated reporting method used was discussed and welcomed. Court thanked all staff for their contribution towards the financial performance of the University and those involved in producing the Annual Report and Accounts. Court approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2016/17.

- **Letter of Representation** **Paper H3**

Court approved the Letter of Representation to provide the External Auditors with a written declaration that the Annual Report and Accounts are sufficient and appropriate and without omission of material facts and its signing by the Principal and Vice-Convener.

- **US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements** **Paper H4**

Court approved the US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements 2016/17, a restatement of the UK figures in US format.

- **'Zero by 2040' Update** **Paper H5**

An update on activity in support of the University's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2040 was reviewed. The initial options assessment undertaken by the renewable and low carbon options group was summarised, with an initial proposal for investment in solar energy to be considered by Estates Committee.

- **Statement of Investment Principles** **Paper H6**

Court approved a Statement of Investment Principles to govern the investment of resources within both the Endowment & Investment Fund and University Treasury balances.

## **10 Estates**

- **Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) Masterplan** **Paper I1**

A masterplan envisaging an expanded single site campus for the Edinburgh College of Art at Lauriston Place was reviewed. The following points were discussed:

- ECA's strong performance since joining the University in 2011 and future ambitions in teaching and research;
- The importance of maintaining and improving student facilities as part of the Masterplan;
- Expected future growth in the creative arts in Scotland; and,
- Providing an overview of planned major estates projects at a future Court Seminar.

The ECA Masterplan was approved.

- **Quartermile** **Paper I2**

An opportunity to acquire a gap site adjacent to the Edinburgh Futures Institute, conditional on entering into a development agreement for the delivery of a new academic facility on the site, was considered. Members discussed conditionality agreements with the developer, the attractiveness of the site to other parties, a desire for the site to be used for academic rather than residential purposes and the benefits of constructing a new academic facility in tandem with the Edinburgh Futures Institute. The strategic acquisition of the site and the associated funding request from University Corporate Resources was approved.

**11 City Deal Update** **Paper J**

An update on the University's participation in the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal was reviewed. The potential for appointing Chancellor's Fellows with a specialism in data driven innovation and an update on financial modelling assessing the incremental impact of the City Deal on the Ten Year Forecast was noted.

**12 Low Carbon College** **Paper K**

Following a progress update considered at the April 2017 meeting, a further update on the partnership with Shanghai JiaoTong University to establish a Low Carbon College in Shanghai Lingang, China, was reviewed. The plans in the context of the University's 'Zero by 2040' carbon neutral ambition was discussed, with data driven innovation to be incorporated into teaching methods.

The signing of a Memorandum of Agreement by the Senior Vice-Principal was approved subject to confirmation that the project team and Legal Services are content with the finalised document. The development of a Firm Proposal was supported.

**13 Distance Learning at Scale** **Paper L**

Plans to establish a small number of large scale distance learning programmes to meet the University's ambition of 10,000 distance learners on credit bearing courses within the next five years were outlined. Building on the University's success in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and involving the Students' Association at the appropriate stage in development was discussed. The update and strategic direction proposed was noted.

**14 EUSA President's Report** **Paper M**

The Student President reported on activities since the last meeting, including Welcome Week events and the positive financial performance of the Students' Association in the year to date.

**ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

**15 Annual Review 2016/17** **Paper N**

Eight feature articles for publication in the Annual Review 2016/17 were approved.

**16 Laigh Year Regulations** **Paper O**

*The Student Vice-President Welfare declared a potential conflict of interest and abstained from discussion and decision-making on the item.*

An amendment to allow – subject to various academic checks and final approval from Senate – student sabbatical officers to serve for a second one-year term of office if re-elected was approved.

**17 Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance** **Paper P**

A summary brief of the revised Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance and the proposed approach to ensuring compliance within the expected timeframe was noted.

**18 UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Consultation** **Paper Q**

The University's draft response to a UK Quality Code for Higher Education consultation was reviewed, with the Assistant Principal Academic Standards & Quality Assurance to finalise the response following comment from the Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

**19 Committee Reports**

• **Exception Committee**

**Paper R1**

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

- Rectorial Election 2018 Regulations – approved following consultation with student and staff union representatives. It was agreed that the election should take place based on previous years' regulations. It is proposed that an independent review of the election process engaging the Electoral Reform Society is undertaken after the 2018 election.
- Purchase of Ion Microprobe – approval for the purchase at an approximate cost of £2.9M, funded by a UK Research Council grant, and delegation of signing authority to the Head of the College of Science & Engineering.

• **Court EU Sub-Group**

**Paper R2**

The report was noted.

• **Court USS Sub-Group**

**Paper R3**

The report was noted.

• **Nominations Committee**

**Paper R4**

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

The report was noted and the following appointments to the Scrutinising Committee for the Rectorial Election 2018 were approved: Dr Claire Phillips (Court representative); Janet Philp (Trade Union representative); and Patrick Kilduff (President of Students' Association).

• **Audit & Risk Committee**

**Paper R5**

The report was noted, with a revision to the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2017/18 endorsed and the Modern Slavery Statement 2016/17

approved.

- **Remuneration Committee**

**Paper R6**

The report was noted. It was noted that the Principal does not attend if his remuneration is being considered and minutes of meetings are published on the University website.

- **Knowledge Strategy Committee**

**Paper R7**

The report and the importance of the University's digital estate was noted.

- **Senate**

**Paper R8**

The report was noted.

## **20 Resolutions**

**Paper S**

The following draft resolution was referred to the General Council and to Senate for observations:

Draft Resolution No. 1/2018: Degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVetMed).

The following resolutions were approved:

Resolution No. 76/2017: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Fire and Structures

Resolution No. 77/2017: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Medicine

## **21 Donations and Legacies**

**Paper T**

Donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 1 September 2017 to 10 November 2017 were noted.

## **22 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.

## **23 Any Other Business**

Court members were reminded of the invitation to attend a reception for long-serving members of staff in St Cecilia's Hall following the conclusion of the meeting.

## **24 Date of February 2019 Meeting**

Monday 18 February 2019 was approved as the date for the third Court meeting of the 2018/19 academic year.

**25 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 5 February 2018