



**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**5 February 2018**

**Minute**

**Present:** Mr Steve Morrison, Rector (in chair)  
The Principal, Professor Peter Mathieson  
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  
Mr Ritchie Walker  
Professor Elizabeth Bomberg  
Professor Alexander Tudhope  
Ms Jo Craiglee  
Dr Frank Armstrong  
Mr David Bentley  
Dr Robert Black  
Ms Perdita Fraser  
Mr Alan Johnston  
Dame 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 Professor Charlie Jeffery  
Vice-Principal Professor Dorothy Miell  
Vice-Principal Professor Dave Robertson  
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 James Saville, Interim Director of Human Resources  
Ms Fiona Boyd, Head of Stakeholder Relations  
Ms Kirstie Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services  
Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services

**Apologies:** Professor Sarah Cooper  
Dr Claire Phillips  
Ms Alison Grant

## **1 Minute**

**Paper A**

Court observed a minute's silence in memory of Lord Sutherland of Houndwood, Principal and Vice-Chancellor from 1994 to 2002, who died on 29 January 2018.

The Minute of the meeting held on 4 December 2017 was approved.

## **2 Matters Arising**

**Verbal**

On behalf of Court, the Rector welcomed Professor Peter Mathieson to his first meeting. The Principal thanked Court and commented on the University's strong position and his interest in further improving the student and staff experience and enhancing widening participation. Further potential for internationalisation and the distinctiveness of the University in its ability to integrate world-leading research activities into distance learning and on-campus teaching was noted.

The University Secretary provided an update on planned sector-wide industrial action by the University & College Union (UCU) in response to proposed changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). 14 days of strike action in February and March are scheduled with action short of a strike expected from 26 February to 19 June. A contingency planning group chaired by the University Secretary is meeting regularly, with an academic sub-group also in operation. The Convener of the Court USS Sub-Group noted that the Sub-Group consisting of lay members has been convened to provide impartial advice given potential conflicts of interest for senior management who are USS members.

Court agreed that the University should seek to minimise disruption to students and prioritise the student experience as strike action and action short of a strike take place.

## **3 Principal's Communications**

**Paper B**

Court noted the report from Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, including the report of the memorial service held for Assistant Principal Professor Jon Oberlander on 12 January and formally recorded its condolences to the family of Professor Oberlander, a greatly valued friend and colleague.

The Principal reported on: student application statistics for 2018-19 entry; the Scottish Government's announcement that the current tuition fee status of EU nationals will be extended to those starting undergraduate courses in 2019-20 for the duration of their course; and the Scottish Government's draft 2018-19 budget, which includes a proposed £11m increase in higher education funding. The Vice-Principal Planning, Resources & Research Policy reported on an encouraging increase in research awards, including a significant Health Data Research UK award and success in the EU Horizon 2020 COFUND application previously approved by Court.

**4 Policy & Resources Committee Report** **Paper C**

Key items considered by the Policy & Resources Committee were summarised, including an overview of current and proposed collaborations between the University and Chinese higher education institutions and commercial partners. It was noted that a future overview could be extended to other Asian countries and to Africa.

**SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

**5 Student Experience Update** **Paper D**

The Senior Vice-Principal introduced an update on the University's student experience enhancement activities. The introduction of mid-course feedback and improved institutional communications was welcomed, with the 2018 National Student Survey opening to final year undergraduates on 5 February.

The Head of College of Science & Engineering summarised a metrics-and-narrative based report focused on the College of Science & Engineering, including key student survey findings, Students' Association feedback and work underway in response.

The Students' Association Vice-President Education provided an overview of planned changes to the system of student class representatives to create a smaller cohort at degree-programme level with personalised training and support from the Students' Association.

Court welcomed the report and discussed improvements to non-academic facilities at King's Buildings, learning from successful examples before undertaking a programme of change, variance in Personal Tutor practices between Schools and the University's improving student/staff ratio.

**6 Outcome Agreement 2018-19** **Paper E**

The broad approach and content for the draft single year Outcome Agreement 2018-19 was agreed, with authority delegated to the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning, to refine the detail of the document prior to the presentation of a final version at the 23 April Court meeting.

**7 Finance Director's Report** **Paper F**

The report, including the November (Period 4) Management Accounts, Quarter 1 Full Year Forecast and the latest iteration of the Ten Year Forecast, was noted. Capital prioritisation proposals were discussed, with the proposals to progress through the University Executive and relevant governance committees before presentation to Court.

**8 City Deal Update** **Paper G**

A summary update on progress towards a detailed City Deal agreement with the UK and Scottish Governments was received. It was noted that the Court City Deal Sub-Group had reviewed the financial modelling for

the University's data driven innovation programme and that the Exception Committee may be utilised should any decisions be required outside of the scheduled Court meeting cycle.

## **9 'Zero by 2040' Investments**

**Paper H**

The Senior Vice-Principal presented a proposal to complete the transitioning of the University's investment portfolio out of investment in fossil fuel companies within the next three years, taking account of the institutional 'Zero by 2040' carbon neutral goal. The support of the Students' Association, Investment Committee and Policy & Resources Committee was noted and the intention to continue to engage with fossil fuel companies around climate change welcomed. It was noted that the University would continue to research, teach and work with fossil fuel companies in line with normal processes and the principle of academic freedom. Members discussed opportunities to invest in low carbon industries, stakeholder communications and plans to exit from affected investments – representing less than one percent of the University's investments – at an appropriate time.

The commitment to cease to invest in fossil fuel companies as soon as practicable in the next three years was approved.

## **10 Estates**

### **• Strathclyde Rowing Centre and Boat Centre**

**Paper I1**

Court approved entering into a 30 year ground lease with North Lanarkshire Council in order to build a new rowing centre and boat store at Strathclyde Country Park.

### **• Disability Access Improvements Programme**

**Paper I2**

Court approved expenditure (over the five year period 2018-19 to 2022-23) from University Corporate Resources to implement the recommendations of the Disabled Go access audits of the University's core buildings and teaching spaces.

## **11 Development & Alumni**

### **• Development & Alumni Office Annual Report 2016/17**

**Paper J1**

The Annual Report was noted and the implementation of an alumni mentoring scheme following a successful trial welcomed.

### **• Governance of Alumni Clubs**

**Paper J2**

Proposals for the official recognition of alumni clubs were approved as set out in the paper.

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

**Paper K**

The Student President provided a report on recent EUSA activities.

## ADDITIONAL ITEM

### **Rosalind Franklin Institute – Joint Venture**

**Paper O**

A summary of the legal arrangements relating to the University's proposed involvement in the Rosalind Franklin Institute – a new national research centre at the interface between the physical, engineering and life sciences – to be established at Harwell, near Oxford, were reviewed. On the basis that the final legal agreements reflect the principles described in the paper, Court agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Corporate Services to conclude the legal agreements, with signing authority granted to the University Secretary.

## ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

### **13 Committee Reports**

- **Exception Committee**

**Paper L1**

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

- High Performance Computer purchase – approved the purchase of the DiRAC 2.5x system to the value of £4.5 million inclusive of VAT, funded by a grant awarded by the Science & Technologies Facilities Council, and the delegation of signing authority to the Head of College of Science & Engineering.
- Stead's Place student accommodation – approved entering into a 20 year lease for the development comprising student accommodation and a hotel with a café subject to agreement of satisfactory Heads of Terms.
- Hua Xia Healthcare – approved the proposed arrangement for the establishment of the Joint Venture and delegation to the Director of Corporate Services, together with the University Secretary, the authority to conclude and execute the legal documentation in line with the principles outlined in the legal summary and the risk management strategy.

- **Court City Deal Sub-Group**

**Paper L2**

The report was noted.

- **Court USS Sub-Group**

**Paper L3**

The report was noted.

- **Nominations Committee**

**Paper L4**

The report was noted.

- **Knowledge Strategy Committee**

**Paper L5**

The report was noted.

- **Senate**

**Paper L6**

The report was noted.

**14 Resolutions**

**Paper M**

The following resolutions were approved:

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

Resolution No. 2/2018: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Languages  
and Classroom Education

Resolution No. 3/2018: Foundation of a Chair of Biochemical Engineering

**15 Donations and Legacies**

**Paper N**

Donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 1  
November 2017 to 19 January 2018 were noted.

**16 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.

**17 Any Other Business**

There was no other business. On behalf of Court, the Student President  
thanked the Rector for his service to Court and the wider University.

**18 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 23 April 2018