



UNIVERSITY COURT

1 October 2018

Minute

Present: Anne Richards, Vice-Convener (in chair)
The Principal, Peter Mathieson
Frank Ross, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh
Alan Brown, General Council Assessor
Doreen Davidson, General Council Assessor
Ritchie Walker, General Council Assessor
Sarah Cooper, Senate Assessor
Claire Phillips, Senate Assessor
Alexander Tudhope, Senate Assessor
Jo Craiglee, Non-Teaching Staff Assessor
Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member
David Bentley, Co-opted Member
Perdita Fraser, Co-opted Member
Alan Johnston, Co-opted Member
Clare Reid, Co-opted Member
Susan Rice, Co-opted Member
Eleri Connick, President, Students' Association
Kai O'Doherty, Vice-President, Students' Association

In attendance: Angi Lamb, Rector's Assessor
University Secretary, Sarah Smith
Senior Vice-Principal Charlie Jeffery
Vice-Principal Moira Whyte
Vice-Principal David Robertson
Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University
Phil McNaul, Director of Finance
Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services
Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary, Student Experience
Theresa Merrick, Director of Communications and Marketing
Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services

Apologies: Ann Henderson, Rector
Edward Bowen, Chancellor's Assessor
Elizabeth Bomberg, Senate Assessor
Robert Black, Co-opted Member

1 Minute

**Paper A1
Paper A2**

The Minute of the meeting and note of the seminar held on 18 June 2018 was approved.

On behalf of Court, the Vice-Convener welcomed new member Clare Reid to her first meeting.

2 Matters Arising

Verbal

There were no matters arising and the action log was noted.

3 Principal's Communications

Paper B

Court noted the contents of the Principal's Report and additional information on: the appointment of current Deputy Director of Finance Lee Hamill as Director of Finance with effect from 1 January 2019 was welcomed; current Director of Finance Phil McNaull was congratulated on the award of Finance Director of the Year at the 2018 British Accountancy Awards, with the Finance Directorate shortlisted in the Finance Team of the Year category; encouraging levels of high calibre applicants at recent senior academic appointment panels; progress over the summer period on external debt financing and the signing of the City Region Deal; a record year for research income in 2017-18, a further 6% increase on the previous year's best ever performance; the 2018 David Hume Lecture given by the Principal on 13 September; and, the Joint Expert Panel report on the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

Members discussed the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and managing impacts in the Central Area for staff and students; welcomed progress in recruiting students from widening participation backgrounds; and noted that, for the 2018/19 pay award, nationwide ballots for strike action or action short of a strike are ongoing.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4 Student Experience – Approach and Action Plan

Paper C

The Senior Vice-Principal presented a proposed change of approach to tackle deep-seated cultural challenges impacting on student experience and an accompanying outline draft Action Plan. The Principal commented on the importance of a strong University-wide approach on this issue.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Support for the focus on deep-seated cultural change and for innovative approaches to achieve this;
- Students' Association views provided in an appendix to Paper D, including improving transport and accommodation and better linking of student academic societies with the academic disciplines in Schools;
- The respective roles of Court, Senate and the senior management team. Senate will consider the paper at its next meeting and the University Executive and the Principal's Direct Reports Group have shaped the outline Action Plan and will oversee its final development and subsequent delivery;
- National and international comparisons, with research intensive universities typically performing less well in student satisfaction surveys but successful examples exist and can be learned from;
- The action plan will be developed further, with milestones and target completion dates set;

- Teaching-related components are now required to feature in academic staff recruitment interviews and annual reviews;
- Merits of adopting and resourcing a change management programme approach;
- Interest in curriculum reform, acknowledging that this would be a long-term project and a significant commitment; and,
- The results of the first University all-staff survey and associated recommendations will be presented to Court.

5 EUSA President's Report

Paper D

The Student President reported on recent developments, including: the #weareedinburgh campaign; workshops delivered by The Consent Collective; and, widening the activities and sports participation grant to include eligible international students. The commercial impact of expanded Edinburgh Festival Fringe activities in Bristo Square upon the Students' Association was discussed and will be considered prior to future negotiations.

6 Review of Undergraduate Scholarships and Bursaries

Paper E

Findings from an evaluation of the University of Edinburgh Scholarship and the Scotland Scholarship schemes and supporting recommendations were reviewed. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Evidence from a sector-wide evaluation of bursaries in England;
- The high value placed on the awards by Edinburgh recipients;
- Support for improving information on the awards to prospective applicants and to new students eligible to receive the award, noting that this is expected to lead to an increase in expenditure given the uncapped number of awards;
- Increasing philanthropic giving for scholarships;
- Levels of support for those in the mid-range of the eligible household income level; and,
- A further widely scoped review of future scholarships will be undertaken, to encompass non-cash support and to take account of any changes resulting from the current review of student support in England.

The continuation of the undergraduate widening participation scholarship programmes and the recommendations were approved as set out in the paper.

7 Finance Director's Report

Paper F

The draft University Group 2017/18 financial results were reviewed, with discussion of: depreciation in relation to estates capital expenditure; pension provisions and forward projections; expenditure growth in relation to income; and, measurement against Key Performance Indicators.

Next steps for the debt restructuring exercise were considered. Court approved the repayment of debt and consequent loan breakage expense as detailed in the paper and the delegation of signing authority for the

loan breakage agreements to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Director of Legal Services.

8 Annual Court Effectiveness Review **Paper G**

The internal review of Court's effectiveness for 2017/18 was presented. It was noted that the externally facilitated effectiveness review approved at the June 2018 meeting will begin shortly with the Convener of Audit & Risk Committee acting as the lead Court member and Nominations Committee acting as the working group with oversight of the review. Court's strategic role, links between Court and Senate and the respective Court and Senate externally facilitated effectiveness reviews were discussed, with the two external facilitators to meet. The volume and presentation of Court papers was discussed, with improvements noted and further progress desired. The annual effectiveness review was approved.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

9 Draft Ordinance: Composition of Court **Paper H**

A draft Ordinance to effect changes to the composition of Court as agreed at the September 2017 meeting was noted and its transmission for statutory consultation approved.

10 City Region Deal Update **Paper I**

Highlights from the current status of Data-Driven Innovation programme activities within the City Region Deal were reviewed. Progress since the formal signing on 7 August and strong interest from potential industry partners was welcomed. Developing linked widening participation activities was discussed, with a data education pilot project in secondary schools underway. Policy & Resources Committee will be kept informed of capital drawdown arrangements.

11 Bayes Centre – Robotics Living Labs **Paper J**

The underwriting of capital expenditure towards the purchase of robotics equipment for living laboratories in the Bayes Centre was approved on the understanding that ~72% will be notionally allocated from the City Deal to part-fund the equipment. The expected payback period was discussed, noting the wider value of the equipment in attracting additional academic activity and funding, including PhD studentships.

12 DiRAC High Performance Computer System Upgrade **Paper K**

The extension of the DiRAC High Performance Computer system conditional on a grant award from the UK Science & Technology Facilities Council, was approved, with signing authority delegated to the Head of College of Science & Engineering.

- 13 College of Science & Engineering: Reorganisation of Endowments** **Paper L**
- Court approved the exercise of its power under Ordinance 209 to adopt the reforms detailed in the paper with regard to the application of endowment funds which have been held in excess of 25 years within the College of Science & Engineering.
- 14 Development & Alumni**
- **Hong Kong Alumni Club** **Paper M1**
- The formal recognition of the University of Edinburgh Alumni Association of Hong Kong was approved.
- **Cross & Salmon Trust** **Paper M2**
- The reappointments of Michael Cross, Janet Salmon and Gerald Philip McNaul as Trustees were approved and the resignation of Gerald Philip McNaul and appointment of Lee Hamill as a Trustee with effect from 1 January 2019 (or such time as Lee Hamill takes office as the University's Director of Finance) was approved.
- 15 Annual Scottish Funding Council Quality Assurance Report** **Paper N**
- The report was approved and the Vice-Convenor authorised to sign the accompanying statement.
- 16 Committee Reports**
- **Exception Committee** **Paper O1**
- The report was noted.
- **Policy & Resources Committee** **Paper O2**
- The report was noted.
- **Audit and Risk Committee** **Paper O3**
- The Convenor of Audit & Risk provided an update on the Committee's recent work, noting that Court member David Bentley will join the Committee to provide cover on a temporary basis. Noting that the newly appointed Risk Manager had reviewed current documentation and proposed enhancements, Court approved updated versions of the:
- Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement;
 - Risk Management Guidance Manual; and,
 - Risk Register Template.
- **Senate** **Paper O4**
- The report was noted.

17 Donations and Legacies

Paper P

Donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 1 June to 31 August 2018 were noted.

18 Uses of the Seal

A record was made available of all documents executed on behalf of the Court since its last meeting and sealed with its common seal.

19 Any Other Business

The Chief Information Office briefed Court on recent malicious attempts to disable aspects of the University's digital networks and the protective measures in place.

20 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 3 December 2018