



**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**29 April 2019**

**Minute**

- Members Present:** Ann Henderson, Rector (in chair)  
Anne Richards, Vice-Convener  
The Principal, Peter Mathieson  
Edward Bowen, Chancellor's Assessor  
Alan Brown, General Council Assessor  
Doreen Davidson, General Council Assessor  
Ritchie Walker, General Council Assessor  
Elizabeth Bomberg, Senate Assessor  
Sarah Cooper, Senate Assessor  
Claire Phillips, Senate Assessor  
Alexander Tudhope, Senate Assessor  
Jo Craiglee, Non-Teaching Staff Assessor  
Frank Ross, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh  
Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member  
Robert Black, 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
- Apologies:** David Bentley, Co-opted Member
- In attendance:** Angi Lamb, Rector's Assessor  
University Secretary Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Strategic Change & Governance
- Presenters & Observers** Senior Vice-Principal Charlie Jeffery  
Vice-Principal Jonathan Seckl  
Vice-Principal Dave Robertson  
Vice-Principal Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer & Librarian  
Lee Hamill, Director of Finance  
Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary Strategic Planning  
Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience  
Gary Jebb, Director of Estates  
Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services  
Theresa Merrick, Director of Communications and Marketing  
Kirstie Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services  
David Gray, Head of School of Biological Sciences (for Item 7)

## **1 Minute**

**Papers A1, A2**

The Rector thanked the School of Engineering for their hospitality and interesting tour for Court members and noted the 'Meet the Court' event for staff and students, which had preceded the meeting.

The Rector thanked Student President Eleri Connick and Vice-President Welfare Kai O'Doherty, whose terms of office conclude in early June, for their service to the student body and the University over the past year and noted that Andrew Wilson, EUSA President-elect and Oona Miller, Vice-President Welfare-elect will be members for the next meeting of Court. The Chancellor has informed the University the new Chancellor's Assessor from 1 August 2019 will be Sheriff Principal Alistair Dunlop QC, who served as Sheriff Principal of Tayside, Central and Fife from 2000-2015 and is a continuing part-time member of the Sheriff Appeal Court.

The Minute of the meeting and the note of the seminar held on 18 February 2019 was approved.

## **2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log**

**Paper A3**

There were no matters arising. The action log was reviewed and noted.

## **3 Principal's Report**

**Paper B**

Court noted the contents of the report and the news that Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery has been appointed as the next Vice-Chancellor of the University of York, with congratulations on his success. The changes in the University's senior leadership were noted, with Professor Jeffery's departure alongside that of Professor Jane Norman and the appointment of the new Vice-Principal Students, Professor Colm Harmon from October. Court was assured that Professor Norman's equality and diversity portfolio would be embedded in the work of the Senior Leadership Team, recognising that celebrating and embracing equality and diversity was a cultural issue across the University and the wider society in which it operates and the work on defining our values was integral to addressing this.

There would be later Court discussion on the planning round and capital prioritisation and the Senior Leadership Team had been working on setting the University on the right course to meet our strategic ambitions in a financially sustainable way, recognising the issue of affordability and the importance of clear prioritisation and scrutiny of our cost base.

On 27 March, the University hosted a Strategic Dialogue Meeting with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), which included the new SFC Chief Executive Karen Watt. This had been a positive meeting with a sense that relationships between SFC and universities will continue to develop.

Finally, congratulations were extended to the winning University Challenge team, the first University of Edinburgh win and first win by a Scottish team since 1984.

## **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

### **4 Student Experience Action Plan Update**

**Paper C**

Court considered an update on the multi-strand programme of work to address the student experience, noting this had been developed further following the last Court seminar, with six priority areas underpinned by 70 individual strands of work, with a programme management methodology used to plan, cost, evaluate and prioritise these. Taking this forward amounted to an additional £15.3m commitment over three years and the Senior Leadership Team had identified this as a priority area in the planning round discussions. The Senior-Vice Principal drew members' attention to the next steps, emphasised the importance of communication and measurement and noted this was intended as a holistic plan that recognised the intersection between student and staff experience and mediated between detailed activity and larger cultural change.

Court welcomed the update and in discussion the following points were raised:

- The parallel development of the University Strategic Plan, EUSA Strategic Plan and Student Experience Action Plan had enabled alignment of these three areas of work.
- Workload allocation and creating a shared understanding of how to address this effectively, including course design and assessment and reduced administrative duplication.
- The importance of communication from before the student arrives and creating a shared sense of endeavour that work undertaken now may benefit future cohorts.

Court welcomed and noted the report.

### **5 EUSA President's Report**

**Paper D**

The Students' Association President reported on recent developments and particularly the work over the past year to create a shared sense of community. The Teaching Awards evening had been a great success and notably Court member Elizabeth Bomberg had been nominated for Best Assessment Feedback and Charlie Jeffery had been honoured with the 'Outstanding Contribution Award: Championing Students' for his work supporting students.

### **6 Strategic Finance & Planning**

#### **• Director of Finance's Report**

**Paper E1**

Court considered the most recent monthly management accounts excluding subsidiaries (February 2017, Period 7), benchmarking analysis of financial performance against the Russell Group peer set, the latest iteration of the Ten Year Forecast aligned to draft Three Year Plans, and the potential impact of accounting for Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension deficit recovery.

Benchmarking with peer universities indicated that Edinburgh's internal funding (i.e. cash inflow from operations) of capital expenditure is lowest in the peer set and

reducing, which linked to the Principal's earlier comments on affordability and prioritisation. It was noted that the University was required to hold provision on its balance sheet for its share of the USS Deficit Recovery Plan and following the adoption of the new UK Financial Reporting Standard (FRS 102), to publish financial results in a prescribed format. A large movement in USS provision had the potential to distort published financial statements sector wide leading to 'on paper' deficits that would require careful communication. The report was noted as providing a transparent and full reflection of the current financial position that was helpful in the context of later items on planning and capital prioritisation.

- **Planning Round 2019-22**

**Paper E2**

Court considered the financial plan for the next rolling 3 year cycle 2019-22, noting this had been reviewed by Policy & Resources Committee. The plans encompass the impact of the City Region Deal and assume a series of management actions to address short term cost pressures while the Service Excellence Programme supports improvement in service delivery and sustainable release of resource through improved process design. Scenario testing on possible outcomes of Brexit and the Augar Review demonstrated these could be managed over the course of the ten year forecast and allow for planned reshaping of the undergraduate student population to reflect academic aspirations.

The proposed University budget allocations to the Edinburgh University Students' Association were noted and there was discussion on the aspiration to pay the Real Living Wage, whilst recognising that EUSA needed to ensure it was in a financially sustainable position. The Senior Leadership Team would continue to support progress through its regular engagement meetings.

Court approved the University's plans for 2019-22 and the proposed plan allocations to the Students' Association (EUSA) and the Sports Union (EUSU).

- **Capital Prioritisation**

**Paper E3**

Court considered an overview of the capital prioritisation exercise which took place in November and December 2018 and the prioritised proposals which resulted. In the context of the affordability challenge outlined by the Principal, the Senior Leadership Team reviewed and clarified the Capital Plan based on principles of student centred, academic inter-disciplinarily and engagement with the wider community. Members welcomed the clarity and focus on underpinning values and there was discussion of some of the hard choices that had been made in deferring projects, recognising the importance of a clear narrative in communicating these decisions. Court approved the outcome of the capital prioritisation exercise.

- **City Deal Data-Driven Innovation Skills Gateway**

**Paper E4**

Proposals for a Data-Driven Innovation (DDI) Skills Gateway had been developed in collaboration with regional and national partners, as part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Integrated Regional Employability and Skills activity funded by Scottish Government. The activity brings together industry, universities, colleges, schools and other partners to provide an integrated pipeline of skills

development and progression routes into data careers. The activities are overseen by a DDI Skills Gateway Advisory Board that will look for opportunities to align with activities being developed as part of the wider DDI Programme, and help facilitate the sharing of expertise, content and experience across the delivery partners. Court approved the University continuing to take a lead throughout the eight year programme delivery, noting the opportunity for significant organisational and reputation benefits.

## **7 International Collaborations**

### **• Low Carbon College**

**Paper F1**

In December 2017, Court approved a proposal for the further development of a partnership with Shanghai JiaoTong University to establish a Low Carbon College (SJTU LCC) in Shanghai Lingang, China. Court considered an update and progress report on developments with details of the business case for the next phase in the development of the partnership. It was noted that this had been previously reviewed and supported by Policy and Resources Committee, that a capital contribution was not required from the University and that staffing can be increased on a staged basis depending on student number and research income growth. There was discussion on the use of 'flying faculty' in the context of carbon reduction and it was noted that over time there would be a greater use of locally employed staff. There was also a broader discussion on the choice of partners for international collaborations and how reputational risk is assessed and it was agreed it may be helpful for this to be a topic for future discussion by Court. Court noted the progress update and approved the business case for development of the partnership opportunity.

### **• Gujarat Biotechnology University**

**Paper F2**

Court considered the business case for a transnational partnership with the Government of the State of Gujarat (GoG), India, to establish a Gujarat Biotechnology University, noting this had been reviewed and supported by International Ventures Group, University Executive and Policy & Resources Committee. The proposal was to enter into a staged, conditional commitment with the Government of Gujarat that will allow us to develop full details of the partnership agreement, with the intention of entering a binding agreement in late 2019/early 2020, noting that academic governance approvals are still required.

The proposed partnership will establish a brand-new small specialist higher education institution, designed and run based on a University of Edinburgh culture of academic innovation, funded by GoG, with University staff and expertise bought in to develop world-class higher education and translational research capacity. There was discussion on the state government, the use of 'flying faculty' as in the previous paper and quality assurance, with assurances that these areas had been considered and the project had been designed with milestones and exit points. South Asia is a key emerging market for the University and economic forecasts predict that India, alongside China and the USA, will become one of the world's largest economies with the greatest demand for higher education. The University's current transnational strategic partnerships are focused mainly in China, so it was timely to diversify into other target regions.

Court approved the proposal that the University should enter into this staged agreement, with a formal agreement with GoG contingent on the proposed curriculum, assessment and quality assurance processes meeting the requirements established by Senate's Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, and on operating models, staff and student services/support, infrastructure and facilities all meeting the University's required standards.

## **8 Estates: King's Buildings Nucleus**

**Paper G**

A proposal to create a hub with modern learning and teaching accommodation adjacent to support activities such as study spaces, library, student services, catering, sport and social facilities, to be known as the King's Buildings Nucleus, was reviewed. It was noted that this the College of Science and Engineering's (CSE) top estates priority and was supported by the Senior Leadership Team through the 2018 capital prioritisation process. Its proposed completion in 2022 will allow the majority of undergraduate teaching and learning for CSE students to take place at King's Buildings campus from the beginning of the 2022/23 academic year.

Members commented on their earlier tour of the campus, the capital prioritisation process and strong student support and accordingly Court approved funding from University Resources to allow the project to progress to completion

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

## **9 Outcome Agreement 2019-20**

**Paper H**

Court agreed the content of the single year Outcome Agreement for 2019-20, and delegated authority to the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning to finalise and submit the Outcome Agreement to the Scottish Funding Council by 30 April 2019.

## **10 EDMARC Staff and Students Report 2018**

**Paper I**

Court considered and approved the annual Equality, Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) reports on staff and student data. There was discussion of trends that may be identified, such as black and minority ethnic student attainment and the gender pay gap and a request for further consideration of this topic at a future meeting.

## **11 CAHSS Reorganisation of Endowments**

**Paper J**

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 Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

## 12 Committee Reports

### • Exception Committee

Paper K1

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

- the delegation of authority to Policy & Resources Committee to approve funding for extension to the University's Advanced Computing Facility.
- the appointment of Professor Colm Harmon as Vice-Principal Students for an initial five year period alongside an open-ended professorial appointment, with an expectation of a 1 October 2019 full start date and possibly an earlier partial appointment.

### • Policy & Resources Committee

Paper K2

The report was noted.

### • Nominations Committee

Paper K3

On the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, Court approved the following appointments from 1 August 2019:

#### University Court

- Caroline Gardner to be appointed as a Co-opted member for a four year term of office to 31 July 2023
- David Law to be appointed as a Co-opted member for a four year term of office to 31 July 2023
- Sarah Wolffe to be appointed as a General Council Assessor for a four year term of office to 31 July 2023
- Jock Millican to be appointed as a General Council Assessor for a four year term of office to 31 July 2023

#### Knowledge Strategy Committee

- Sue Currie to be appointed for a three year term of office to 31 July 2022

To ensure that an external (non-Court) member can join Knowledge Strategy Committee, Court approved the following minor amendment to the Committee's Terms of Reference:

#### Knowledge Strategy Committee Terms of Reference

##### 2. Composition

2.7 The term of office of [members appointed by Court](#) ~~members will be no longer than their membership of Court and~~ will be for a maximum of three years.

#### Audit and Risk Committee

- Grant Macrae to be appointed for a three year term of office to 30 April 2022

#### Curators of Patronage

- Moira Whyte to be appointed for a three year term of office to 30 April 2022

- Dave Robertson to be appointed for a three year term of office to 30 April 2022

#### Staff Benefits Scheme

- Bruce Nelson to be appointed as trustee for a three year term of office to 31 May 2022

- **Audit & Risk Committee**

**Paper K4**

The report was noted, including the new co-sourced arrangement for Internal Audit with KPMG.

- **Knowledge Strategy Committee**

**Paper K5**

The report was noted.

- **Senate**

**Paper K6**

The report was noted.

### **13 Resolutions**

**Paper L**

The following resolution was approved: Resolution No. 6/2019: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Fluid Mechanics.

The following draft resolutions were referred to the General Council and to Senate for observations:

Draft Resolution No. 14/2019: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations

Draft Resolution No. 15/2019: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations

Draft Resolution No. 16/2019: Higher Degree Programme Regulations

### **14 Donations and Legacies**

**Paper M**

Donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 26 January 2019 to 5 April 2019 were noted.

### **15 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **16 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 17 June 2019.