



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2019

Web Version

Minute

- Members Present:** Anne Richards, Vice-Convener (in chair)
Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor
Alastair Dunlop, Chancellor's Assessor
Doreen Davidson, General Council Assessor
Jock Millican, General Council Assessor
Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor
Elizabeth Bomberg, Senate Assessor
Sarah Cooper, Senate Assessor
Claire Phillips, Senate Assessor
Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member
Perdita Fraser, Co-opted Member
Caroline Gardner, Co-opted Member
Alan Johnston, Co-opted Member
David Law, Co-opted Member
Susan Rice, Co-opted Member
Jo Craiglee, Non-Teaching Staff Assessor
Andrew Wilson, President, Students' Association
Oona Miller, Vice-President, Students' Association
- Apologies:** Ann Henderson, Rector
Alexander Tudhope, Senate Assessor
Clare Reid, Co-opted Member
Frank Ross, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh
Angi Lamb, Rector's Assessor
- In attendance:** Sarah Smith, University Secretary
- Presenters & Observers:** Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services
Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services
Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience
Hugh Edmiston, Vice-Principal Business Development and Director of Corporate Services
Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal, Students
Gary Jebb, Director of Estates
Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University
Theresa Merrick, Director of Communications & Marketing
Dave Robertson, Vice-Principal & Head of College
James Saville, Director of Human Resources
Jonathan Seckl, Vice-Principal Planning, Resources & Research Policy
Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary Strategic Planning
Moira Whyte, Vice-Principal & Head of College

1 Minute

Papers A1-A2

The Minute of the meeting and note of the seminar held on 30 September 2019 were approved.

2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log

Paper A2

There were no matters arising. The action log was reviewed. It was noted that a brief update on the Transport Strategy would be included within the Student Residential Accommodation Strategy item later in the agenda.

3 Principal's Report

Paper B

Court noted the contents of the report and additional information on:

- A ceremony to mark the return and repatriation of remains of nine individuals to the Vedda, an indigenous group from Sri Lanka that is under the threat of extinction. Accompanying research has been co-authored with Vedda representatives and the Max Planck Institute and has provided useful information to the Vedda people about the diet, lifestyle and history of their ancestors;
- The recall and assisted travel of 21 students on exchange at the University of Hong Kong following the suspension of tuition in mid-November;
- Industrial action is continuing with strike action until 4 December and action short of a strike ongoing for an open ended period;
- The first international meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative University will be hosted by the University from 17-19 April 2020, with 600 students expected to attend, including 100 from the University of Edinburgh;
- The BBC Radio 4 Today programme will broadcast from the Playfair Library on 3 December;
- A paper to be reviewed by Estates Committee on 4 December regarding a planned expansion of the Institute of Regeneration & Repair and wider enabling works for the BioQuarter site at Little France. If recommended by Estates Committee, accelerated approval for funding will be sought from Exception Committee to allow a potential VAT saving to be realised. The project is part of a wider co-location strategy for medicine at the BioQuarter and will release space in the Central Area.

Members discussed the Institute of Regeneration & Repair expansion paper, noting that an update on capital prioritisation will be considered by Estates Committee on 4 December and the standard mechanism to be used for achieving the VAT saving.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4 Student Experience Update

Paper C

An update on the work of the University Executive Standing Committee on Student Experience was reviewed. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Improving communication of the student experience action plan in its totality, both proactively and on the University website for those searching for more information;

- Adding greater contextual information on planned individual project expenditure to future reports;
- Learning from other universities, including international best practice examples, on student-led communication; and,
- Progress with the over 70 different stands of work initially identified in April 2019 with some being taken forward presently, others scheduled for 2020 and the remainder awaiting detailed proposals for review by the Committee.

5 EUSA President's Report

Paper D

The Students' Association President reported on recent developments including a Register to Vote campaign that has seen 4,000 students applying for voter registration in Edinburgh, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Week (11-15 November), input into discussions on the University's future size and shape covering implications for the city and affordable student housing and agreement in principle by the Students' Association Board of Trustees to an accelerated framework for payment of the Real Living Wage, with further detail to be provided to Court when finalised. Taking a holistic view of the Festivals and other external events with commercial trading impacts was discussed, with Corporate Services Group and the Students' Association jointly working on a three year plan and ten year vision, to be submitted to Court when complete.

6 Student Residential Accommodation Strategy Annual Update

Paper E

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the first annual update to the Student Residential Accommodation Strategy 2018-2028 and provided an update on the development of a transport strategy. In addition to greater provision of rental bicycles and council plans to increase pedestrianised spaces in the Old Town discussions are underway with Lothian Buses. Price banding for student accommodation in relation to the diversity of backgrounds within different residences and relevant draft legislation under consideration by the Scottish Parliament was discussed.

Court approved the annual update to the Student Residential Accommodation Strategy 2018-2028 and noted the forecast additional 1,700 additional bed requirement by 2026/27 given anticipated stock movement and projected demand.

7 Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report

Paper F

A summary of Audit & Risk Committee's activities and opinions in 2018/19 was reviewed. It was agreed that the report provides reasonable assurance that the University's internal control environment during 2018/19 was sufficiently adequate for Court to approve 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 2019 that could impact on the ability of Court to approve the Annual Report and Accounts had been reported.

9 Strategic Plan 2016 Performance Measurement Framework Annual Report **Paper H**

The third and final annual report for the Strategic Plan 2016 Performance Measurement Framework was reviewed. The inclusion of a wider overview of achievements during the Strategic Plan 2016 period was welcomed including the City Region Deal and improvements in widening access and sustainability. It was noted that while the figures for the third student satisfaction measure (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey results) had reduced over the period this was in line with Russell Group peer institutions.

10 Finance
• Director of Finance's Report **Paper I1**

An update including the latest iteration of the Ten Year Forecast and developments relating to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) was considered. It was noted that the next iteration of the Ten Year Forecast will be revised to include outcomes from future size and shape work. With regard to the USS pension scheme, a planned rise in contributions from October 2021 is expected to add circa £8m per annum to the University's costs. The next valuation is scheduled as at 31 March 2020, with the second report of the Joint Expert Panel expected by the end of this calendar year to feed into discussion on any future changes.

• Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19 **Paper I2**

Following scrutiny by the Audit & Risk Committee and the Policy & Resources Committee, the draft Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2019 were presented for approval. Members discussed communication of the financial results, including the joint text agreed by UK university financial directors to explain the significant non-cash pension movements that have led to the total comprehensive expenditure outcome for the year, mirroring other universities in proportion to their size within the Universities Superannuation Scheme. It was recognised that the underlying operational performance had been positive in 2018/19 with the operating surplus important for reinvestment in core University activities. All staff involved in contributing to the document were thanked and the Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19 approved.

• Letter of Representation **Paper I3**

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 signing by the Principal and Vice-Convenor, was approved.

• Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19 – US GAAP **Paper I4**

The US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements 2018/19, a restatement of the UK figures in US format, was approved.

11 Social Enterprise and Social Investment Strategy

Paper J

Building on previous agreement for the principle of engaging in social investments and approval for an initial tranche of investments, a draft social enterprise and social investment strategy was reviewed. Building a portfolio to achieve a balance between financial and social returns was discussed. Support for including investments in student social enterprises was expressed, with the intention to attract matched funding for some investments in this area by summer 2020. The strategy was approved.

12 Senior Lay Member: Recruitment and Election

Paper K

Proposed arrangements for the recruitment and election process for the new position of Senior Lay Member were considered. The proposed remuneration for the position in relation to equivalent positions at other Scottish universities and other positions on Court was discussed, noting the unique legislative requirement to offer remuneration for the position and the option for the postholder to decline or return any remuneration to the University.

Court:

- Agreed to authorise Nominations Committee as the committee with delegated responsibilities for the Senior Lay Member appointment process, with flexibility for the Nominations Committee to sub-delegate to a smaller Selection Committee to shortlist and interview candidates;
- Agreed the recruitment and election timetable set out in the paper;
- Noted the intended use of a recruitment consultancy to assist in attracting applicants;
- Agreed to the use of the Electoral Reform Services external voting platform;
- Noted the draft Information Pack and criteria for assessing applicants;
- Agreed to set the remuneration level at an honorarium of £15,000 per annum if requested by the postholder; and,
- Approved the draft election and appointment regulations subject to minor amendment relating to categories excluded from applying.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

13 Court Staff Member Election Regulations

Paper L

Regulations governing the conduct of elections for the Court positions of Professional Services Staff Member and Academic Staff Member scheduled for 24-26 March 2020 were approved.

14 Senate Election Regulations

Paper M

Regulations governing the conduct of elections to the Senatus Academicus ('Senate') scheduled for 24-26 March 2020 were approved.

15 Committee Reports

- **Exception Committee**

Paper N1

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

- Capital equipment expenditure was approved for the FASTBLADE Structural Fatigue Facility;
- A lease on the facility at Rosyth; and,
- Delegated signing authority for the capital expenditure to the Head of College of Science and Engineering and delegated approval authority for the Director of Estates in consultation with the Director of Legal Services to finalise the lease.

- **Policy and Resources Committee**

Paper N2

The report was noted.

- **Nominations Committee**

Paper N3

The report was noted and progress in implementing the recommendations of the External Effectiveness Review discussed. A revised Delegated Authority Schedule is planned for the next meeting cycle with the recommendations that were not prioritised to be considered after the conclusion of Governance Act compliance work.

- **Remuneration Committee**

Paper Tabled

All attendees with the exception of the University Secretary, the Director of Human Resources and the Head of Court Services were absent for the duration of this item. All Court members with the exception of the Principal were present.

A paper outlining Remuneration Committee's recommendations for the 2020 review of the remuneration of the University's senior leadership team was considered. Wider work on gender and ethnic pay equality and the use of external and internal benchmarking was discussed. It was undertaken to consider further whether the paper could be published as an 'open' Court paper.

Court endorsed the approach to the review of senior management salaries to be undertaken by the Principal, to be presented for approval by the Remuneration Committee in January 2020.

Court endorsed the approach to the review of the Principal's salary, with the Vice-Convenor to undertake an annual performance review with the Principal and the Convenor of Remuneration Committee to present recommendations for approval at a separate meeting of the Remuneration Committee in January 2020.

- **Audit and Risk Committee**

Paper N4

The report was noted and the Modern Slavery Statement 2018/19 and the updated Receipt and Provision of Gifts, Hospitality and Other Benefits Policy approved.

- **Knowledge Strategy Committee**

Paper N5

The report was noted and the Collections Management Policy 2020-2030 approved.

- **Senate**

Paper N6

The report was noted and work on the concordat to support the career development of researchers welcomed.

16 Resolutions

Paper O

The following resolutions were approved:

Resolution No. 67/2019: Foundation of a Chair of Chemical Engineering Technology

Resolution No. 68/2019: Foundation of a Chair of Infectious Diseases and HIV

Resolution No. 69/2019: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Education

Resolution No. 70/2019: Foundation of a Jason Reese Chair of Multiscale Fluid
Mechanics

Resolution No. 71/2019: Foundation of a Chair of Behavioural Sciences

17 Donations and Legacies; Global Alumni Events

Paper P

Donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 7 September 2019 to 8 November 2019 were noted along with information on upcoming global alumni events.

18 Court Meeting Dates 2020/21

Paper Q

The following meeting dates were approved:

- Monday 28 September 2020 (Seminar and Meeting)
- Monday 30 November 2020 (Meeting)
- Monday 22 February 2021 (Seminar and Meeting)
- Monday 26 April 2021 (Meet the Court event and Meeting)
- Monday 14 June 2021 (Meeting)

19 Any Other Business

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

A festive lunch and dinner will take place on 23 December for students staying in Edinburgh over the winter vacation, with 610 students expected to attend.

It was requested that future editions of the Court meeting newsletter be circulated to Court members.

20 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 17 February 2020.