



UNIVERSITY COURT

17 February 2020

Web Version

Minute

- Members Present:** Ann Henderson, Rector (in chair)
Anne Richards, Vice-Convener
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
Alexander Tudhope, 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
Clare Reid, 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:** 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
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
Dorothy Miell, Vice-Principal & Head of College
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

The meeting was preceded by a presentation of the Science Council Employer Champion award by Helen Gordon, Chief Executive of the Science Council.

1 Minute **Paper A1**

The Minute of the meeting held on 2 December 2019 was approved.

2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log **Paper A2**

There were no matters arising and it was requested that all outstanding actions be reviewed in advance of the next meeting.

3 Principal's Report **Paper B**

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

- the coronavirus outbreak, noting that the University is monitoring the situation closely, with mitigating actions under development;
- the appointment of Hugh Edmiston as Senior Vice-President at Singapore Management University; the appointment of Jonathan Seckl as Senior Vice-Principal and Senior Responsible Owner for the University's involvement in the City Region Deal; and, the planned recruitment of a new Vice-Principal for Research and Commercialisation. A two year fixed term secondment opportunity will be created for an Interim Director of Corporate Services while an external review of the University's professional services is undertaken;
- a £20m partnership with Legal & General to improve understanding of care in later life through the Advanced Care Research Centre, the largest industry investment received by the University to date;
- industrial action relating to the Universities Superannuation Scheme and pay, scheduled for 14 days across three weeks beginning on 24 February;

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4 Communications and Engagement on Student Experience **Paper C**

An update on how communications are supporting activities within the Student Experience Action Plan to improve the student experience was reviewed. The following points were raised in discussion:

- the importance of communicating potentially disruptive building works;
- working in partnership with the Students' Association to develop Teviot Row as the heart of the Central Area;
- uniting disparate projects under a common theme when communicating progress, e.g. using a single hashtag or strapline;
- considering alumni volunteers as a channel of communication, e.g. alumni from widening participation backgrounds sharing experiences with current students from similar backgrounds;
- enabling students to act in implementing actions in addition to a consultative 'student voice' role; and,
- the interaction between staff and student experience activities, e.g. designing a new curriculum with the support of staff and students and empowering professional services staff in their work with students to the benefit of all.

The update and examples in the paper of the communications approach for major projects was welcomed.

5 EUSA President's Report

Paper D

The Students' Association President reported on recent developments including a student referendum on ceasing the sale of all beef products in Students' Association venues. The motion was defeated, with 2,439 votes for and 3,378 against. Other recent developments included activities around National Student Money Week from 3-7 February, with many ideas received to make the city more affordable and a request from the Students' Association that the University's rent guarantor scheme is reviewed to improve flexibility. It was noted that rent guarantor scheme is sector-leading and is due for review having been in operation for four years.

6 Director of Finance's Report

Paper E

The Director of Finance provided an update on the Quarter One forecast position, the latest iteration of the Ten Year Forecast, early results from a Russell Group financial benchmarking exercise and a summary of the second report from the Universities Superannuation Scheme Joint Expert Panel. In discussion, it was noted that the next Planning Round document and Ten Year Forecast will incorporate new assumptions resulting from the size and shape project, the Quarter Two forecast position is uncertain but is hoped to be improved on the Quarter One projections and scenario planning in relation to key areas of overseas recruitment is underway.

7 Edinburgh BioQuarter: Route to Formalising Partnership Arrangements

Paper F

A proposal to formalise the partnership between the University, Scottish Enterprise, the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian at the BioQuarter site at Little France was reviewed. Court approved in principle the formation of a company limited by shares split between the partners and associated actions subject to conditions set out in the paper.

8 World Class Data Infrastructure IT Equipment Procurement

Paper G

Procurement of Information Technology (IT) equipment for the City Region Deal's World Class Data Infrastructure (WCDI) programme to be located at the newly named Edinburgh International Data Facility was considered. Incorporating quantifiable sustainability measures within future proposals with potential climate impacts was discussed, with work underway led by Sandy Tudhope, University Lead on Climate Responsibility & Sustainability, and Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility & Sustainability. Court approved the procurement for the IT equipment for the WCDI programme, using an open procedure through the Official Journal of the European Union. Court agreed that, following the successful conclusion of the procurement process, contract signature (for an initial period of 5 years) is delegated to Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor. Subsequent to contract signature, authority is delegated to Professor Mark Parsons, EPCC Director and WCDI Senior Responsible Officer, under the governance of City Deal Executive Governance Group, to issue Purchase Orders against the IT Building Block price list,

the key output of the procurement. An annual expenditure update was also requested.

9 Estates

• Capital Prioritisation 2019

Paper H1

The outcome of a further capital prioritisation process undertaken during autumn 2019 by the Senior Leadership Team was noted. The following points were raised in discussion:

- whether the Old Kirk Postgraduate Study Centre may be prioritised in future – this will likely be dependent on securing philanthropic support for the project;
- sustainability considerations for new and existing buildings – with the key consideration being achieving a long term sustainable approach to heating the estate – the high standard of insulation planned for new buildings will assist in mitigation;
- ensuring there is sufficient high quality teaching space for Schools in the Central Area that have potential to grow – the Edinburgh Futures Institute building and decant of some Edinburgh Medical School staff and facilities to the BioQuarter site will generate or free up significant space in the Central Area; and,
- constraints on office space for academic staff in the Central Area and considering unintended consequences for both the staff and student experience of increasing shared offices.

• Usher Institute for Population Health Sciences

Paper H2

A funding request to deliver a new building for the Usher Institute for Population Health Sciences as one of the five innovation hubs funded by the City Region Deal was reviewed. An anticipated future funding request for car parking was discussed, noting that this a City of Edinburgh Council requirement. Ensuring that newly available space in the Central Area is reconfigured to an equivalent standard to new facilities at the BioQuarter site was discussed, with funding provisionally set aside in the capital prioritisation plan for Central Area redevelopment.

Court:

- approved funding from City Region Deal sources and University Resources to deliver the Usher Institute, in addition to the previously approved funding from University Resources for design team fees;
- noted that this does not include a Usher allocation to University car parking which will be requested as part of a separate project; and,
- noted the proposal to incorporate 1200sqm of shell space for future fit-out.

• Queen's Medical Research Institute (QMRI) – including BioResearch and Veterinary Services (BVS) Estates Strategy

Paper H3

Court:

- noted the interdependency of the QMRI refurbishment project with the Institute for Regeneration & Repair Expansion as part of the overarching co-location strategy;

- approved funding from University Resources to deliver the QMRI Biomedical Research Facility refurbishment project at the BioQuarter campus;
- noted that this funding is in addition to the previously approved funding from University Resources for design team fees; and,
- noted the outline BVS Estates Strategy and that the Full BVS Estates Strategy will be presented to Estates Committee in March 2020.

• **Peffermill Sports Village: Student Accommodation**

Paper H4

A funding request to deliver new student accommodation within the Peffermill Sports Village was reviewed. Members discussed:

- provision of family accommodation, with the Peffermill site intended for single person rooms – family accommodation at the Peffermill site would have VAT complications but is being provided at other locations;
- Students' Association concerns over affordability of accommodation in general, while welcoming the greater provision of University-owned accommodation that the Peffermill site would allow – it was noted that the University provides the widest range of accommodation pricing in Scotland;
- community space including gardens – while not suitable at the Peffermill site, the 'porous University' concept encouraging community engagement is, for example, an important part of the design of the Edinburgh Futures Institute; and,
- requesting a wider discussion on student accommodation including family accommodation, to be incorporated with the annual update of the Student Residential Accommodation Strategy.

Court approved funding from University Resources to deliver new student accommodation at Peffermill Sports Village and approved a request to the University of Edinburgh Estates Services Company to deliver the Peffermill Sports Village.

• **41-45 Gilmore Place Student Accommodation**

Paper H5

A refurbishment and new build opportunity on the site of a former nunnery and care home to form new student accommodation was considered. Court:

- approved the corporate investment appraisal model as set out in the paper; and,
- approved proceeding with the finalisation of Heads of Terms and Agreement to Lease documentation for entering into a 20-year full repairing and insuring lease on 41- 45 Gilmore Place at the initial rental level set out in the paper.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

10 Draft Ordinances: Academic Freedom; Removal of Court Members

Paper I

Court considered the following draft Ordinances and approved their transmission for statutory consultation:

- i) Ordinance No. 215: Amendment of Ordinance 208: Employment of Academic Staff; and,
- ii) Ordinance No. 216: Removal of Members of the University Court.

11 Committee Reports

• Exception Committee

Paper J1

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

- Edinburgh BioQuarter Infrastructure Projects: noting the rationale for consideration outwith the Court meeting cycle to allow a potential time-limited VAT saving to be realised and the overarching co-location and development strategy for the campus, funding from City Region Deal sources to deliver enabling infrastructure works at the Edinburgh BioQuarter was approved and funding from University Resources was approved to progress the Institute for Regeneration and Repair Expansion (noting that the latter does not include previously approved funding for design team fees, statutory approvals and main contractor pre-construction services).
- the extension of the Cirrus Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council Tier 2 High Performance Computing service was approved and signing authority delegated to the Head of College of Science & Engineering.

• Policy and Resources Committee

Paper J2

The report was noted.

• Nominations Committee

Paper J3

All individuals recommended for reappointment or appointment did not participate in discussion or decision-making on this item.

The report was noted and on the recommendation of Nominations Committee it was agreed to:

- reappoint Perdita Fraser and Frank Armstrong as Co-opted members of Court for a second three year term of office from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2023;
- appoint Alan Johnston as Convener of Policy & Resources Committee for a one year term of office from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021;
- appoint Caroline Gardner as Convener of Audit & Risk Committee and Convener of Remuneration Committee for an initial one year term of office from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021; and,
- approve in principle the recruitment of a remunerated independent professional chair with pensions expertise for the Staff Benefits Scheme Trustees, noting that this will enable a recruitment process to begin with the intention of submitting a recommended candidate to Court before the end of the academic year.

• Remuneration Committee Annual Report

Paper J4

The annual report covering the period of 1 December 2018 to 31 December 2019 was noted.

- **Knowledge Strategy Committee**

Paper J5

The report was noted and it was agreed to establish a Court Sub-Group to scrutinise an expected request to Exception Committee for additional financial contingency for the Core IT Systems for HR & Finance programme. The Sub-Group membership was agreed as: Alan Johnston, Doreen Davidson, David Law and Peter Mathieson.

- **Senate**

Paper J6

The report was noted.

12 Donations and Legacies; Global Alumni Events

Paper K

Donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 9 November 2019 to 10 January 2020 were noted along with information on upcoming global alumni events.

13 Resolutions

Paper L

The following resolutions were approved:

Resolution No. 1/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Scottish Legal History

Resolution No. 2/2020: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Geography

Resolution No. 3/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Computational Statistics

Resolution No. 4/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Fine Art

14 Any Other Business

On behalf of Court, the Rector congratulated Hugh Edmiston on his appointment as Senior Vice-President at Singapore Management University and thanked him for his service to the University. Members were reminded to observe the confidentiality of Court papers and discussions where appropriate.

15 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 27 April 2020.