



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

25 January 2016

Draft Minute

Present: Dr Anne Richards (Convener)
The Principal
Dr Chris Masters
Dr Marialuisa Aliotta
Mr David Bentley
Ms Doreen Davidson
Ms Alison Grant
Lady Susan Rice
Mr Jonny Ross-Tatam
Ms Sarah Smith, University Secretary

In attendance: Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery
Mr Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
Ms Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
Mr Gary Jebb, Director of Estates and Buildings
Mr Phil McNaul, Director of Finance
Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services
Mr Martyn Peggie, Deputy Director of HR
Ms Pauline Jones, Head of Strategic Performance & Research Policy
(for Item 5)
Ms Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services (for Items 9, 10 and 11)

Apologies: Vice-Principal Professor Jonathan Seckl
Ms Zoe Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources

1 Minute

Paper A

The Minute of the meeting held on 16 November 2015 was approved. The Convener noted that, in relation to Item 15: Subsidiary Company Board Membership, the Director of Corporate Services has supplied information on the gender balance of subsidiary company boards, with a review to be undertaken.

2 Matters Arising

Verbal

The Committee received an update on the internal investigation and noted that a review of internal controls across the University will be initiated shortly, following consultation with the Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee.

3 Principal's Communications

Verbal

The Principal reported on: the outcome of the UK and Scottish Spending Reviews, welcoming a statement from the Deputy First Minister that core research budgets will be protected, with the overall Scottish Funding Council support for the sector in the process of finalisation; negotiations regarding future funding of the Digital Health & Care Institute; possible strategic partnerships with other higher education institutions and research institutes; encouraging initial indications of student applications for entry in the 2016/17 academic year and for research income in the present year; and, the imminent advertisement for a Chair in Agriculture & Food Security.

Members discussed links with other higher education institutions internationally and domestically, including potential partnerships in London and opportunities for research and teaching collaborations.

The University Secretary provided an update on the Higher Education Governance Bill, with Stage One concluded on 14 January and Stage Two expected to begin in the second week of February. It was noted that the Scottish Government has indicated that amendments will be tabled at Stage Two to:

- remove the power for Ministers to alter the composition of Courts and Senates through secondary legislation;
- remove a limit on the size of Senates; and,
- enable a nomination committee to interview and select electoral candidates for the Chair/Vice-Convener position prior to an election by all staff and students.

The prospect of further amendments to the Bill, the expected transitional period and mitigating the risk of reclassification by the Office for National Statistics were discussed.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4 Draft Strategic Plan 2016

Paper C

A high level draft of the Strategic Plan 2016 was reviewed. Members commented that:

- Partnerships should refer to employers more generally rather than industry employers
- The profile of the Global Academies could be raised in the document, and the challenges in developing original thinking required to achieve change
- The use of the word 'impact' could be considered
- 'Helping individuals realise their potential' or 'equipping people to be good citizens with an ethical, moral base within society' may be preferable to a narrower, employer-focused reference,

particularly given the growth in self-employment, entrepreneurialism and interest in charitable work

- Staff communication should be considered carefully at the appropriate stage.

5 Undergraduate Bursary Review

Paper D

The Committee considered an evaluation of the University of Edinburgh and Scotland Accommodation bursary schemes introduced in 2012/13 and 2013/14 respectively. Improving the response rate of recipients to the evaluation and the appropriate bursary amount in comparison with similar institutions for those in different parental income brackets were discussed.

It was agreed that the bursary schemes are effective and should not be substantially changed but that more work should be done to ensure that the full support available for students is more visible. It was noted that the replacement of maintenance grants by loans for English-domiciled students from 2016/17 may lead to a further review in the following year.

6 Finance Director's Update

Paper B

The Committee received a progress update on the external debt raising project, the first quarter financial forecast, the latest Management Accounts (to 30 November 2015 and to 31 December 2015), amendments to the Ten Year Forecast and recent developments relating to the Staff Benefits Scheme and the Universities Superannuation Scheme – with a more detailed update on the Staff Benefits Scheme to be tabled at the following meeting.

7 UNPRI Responsible Investment Policy

Paper E

The approach taken in responsible investing as set out in the paper was endorsed and the accompanying policy statement approved for submission to Court.

8 City Deal

Paper F

The Senior Vice-Principal provided an update on discussions to agree a City Deal for the Edinburgh City-region. The prospect of establishing a Court Sub-Group should significant decisions affecting University interests be required on a timescale that prevents consideration within the standard PRC and Court meeting pattern was noted.

9 Roslin Technologies

Paper G

The Director of Corporate Services introduced a summary of the business case and legal arrangements proposed between the University and JB Equity for the creation of Roslin Technologies Ltd, following consideration by the PRC Sub-Group. It was noted that the Sub-Group had examined the case in relation to the Sunergos Innovations proposal and tested the support of the School for the venture and was satisfied in both areas. The University's role in the appointment of the independent director and the balance of directors on the Roslin Technologies board was discussed and the possibility of maintaining a 50% shareholding in the event of further funding rounds. It was noted that the venture would comply with the University's research ethics policies.

The Committee agreed to recommend to Court that authority be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services to conclude the legal agreements, with signing authority delegated to the University Secretary.

10 Large Animal Research and Imaging Facility (LARIF)

Verbal

The Committee was updated on progress with the LARIF project following approval by the Exception Committee on 19 December 2015 of £13.2M funding support.

11 Hua Xia Healthcare

Paper H

A paper detailing discussions in progress between the Usher Institute in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and Hua Xia Healthcare Limited to explore options to create a commercially funded Institute of Postgraduate Medicine and Healthcare Management was reviewed. Members discussed the likely business model, establishing a governance model suitable for the venture, working with a large overseas commercial organisation, procuring Chinese legal advice and suitable support for academic colleagues leading negotiations.

The intention to submit a more detailed paper including a business plan and risk register to the following meeting was noted.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

12 People Report

Paper I

The report was noted.

- 13 Estates Committee Report** **Paper J**
- The report was noted, with possible strategic acquisitions discussed and expenditure on student experience projects detailed in the paper welcomed.
- 14 Investment Committee Report** **Paper K**
- The report was noted.
- 15 Annual TRAC return and Full Economic Cost rates 2014/15** **Paper L**
- The annual TRAC return totalling annual University income and expenditure across teaching, research and other activities on a Full Economic Cost basis was reviewed. It was noted that, while the overall figures were similar to those of other research-intensive institutions, action should be taken to reverse the declining trend in the Full Economic Cost surplus evident over the previous five years. A report will be submitted to PRC following consideration by the Principal's Strategy Group and the Central Management Group, with cost containment and the development of commercial opportunities expected to provide the greatest scope for improvement.
- The results of the TRAC return and Full Economic Cost rates 2014/15 were approved for submission to the Scottish Funding Council and the UK Research Councils.
- 16 Research and Commercialisation Statistics** **Paper M**
- The Committee noted and welcomed the research and commercialisation statistics for the four months to 30 November 2015, including growth in EU and industry awards and the maintenance of a 40% success rate for grant applications.
- 17 Any Other Business** **Verbal**
- The Director of Corporate Services updated the Committee on progress with Sunergos Innovations, with another university indicating that it may join the venture.
- 18 Date of next meeting**
- Monday, 4 April 2016 at 2.30pm in the Elder Room, Old College.