



**UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE**

**9 April 2018**

**Minute**

- Present:** Peter Mathieson (Convener)  
David Argyle, Chris Cox, Ewen Cameron, Gavin Douglas, Hugh Edmiston,  
David Gray, Lee Hamill, Gary Jebb, Richard Kenway, Dorothy Miell,  
Gavin McLachlan, David Robertson, James Saville, Jonathan Seckl,  
Tracey Slaven, James Smith and Moira Whyte.
- In attendance:** Fiona Boyd, Kirstie Graham and Judy Robertson (for item 3).
- Apologies:** Leigh Chalmers, Charlie Jeffery, Andrew Morris, Phil McNaull, Jane Norman,  
Jeremy Robbins, Sarah Smith and Rob Tomlinson.

**1 Minute**

**Paper A**

The Minute of the meeting held on 19 March 2018 was approved.

**2 Principal's Communications**

The Principal reported that the Director of Finance, Phil McNaull had announced his intention to retire at the end of the calendar year and members of the Executive formally noted their thanks to him; the dispute over the USS pension remained unresolved; the recent series of open forum meetings held with staff and students around the University campuses; a recent visit to Brussels with the Principal of the University of Glasgow, where they had agreed that the two Universities would present a united front on Brexit.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**3 Data Education for All**

Judy Robertson, Chair of Digital Learning, gave a stimulating presentation on bringing the benefits of the City Region Deal to local school pupils. The Executive welcomed the ambitious and positive response to the opportunities presented by the City Deal and noted its alignment with the University's strategy on Digital Transformation and Data and Contributing Locally.

**4 Digital Disruption and Higher Education**

Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University gave a presentation on the digital threats to the traditional model of higher education and members noted the issues raised.

## **STRATEGIC ITEM**

- 5 Developing a University Strategy: Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence and Misconduct** **Paper B**

The University is committed to preventing and responding to sexual violence and misconduct, gender-based hate crime and harassment on its campuses. A “one year on” update of a Universities UK report was published in March 2018 and this provided an evidence base to develop a strategy and programmes of work to respond effectively to this important issue. The Executive considered a paper setting out a number of measures, with the key proposal the establishment of a taskforce with membership from across the University to formulate a strategy and deliver on a work-programme. Members welcomed the University wide approach and noted the important of: encompassing both staff and students, considering broad misconduct issues, including an international dimension and establishing effective relationships with other agencies.

## **OPERATIONAL ITEMS**

- 6 Planning Round** **Paper C**

The Executive noted current progress through the business planning cycle and endorsed EUSA and EUSU’s plans, which would be presented to the 23 April Court meeting for consideration and approval.

- 7 Finance Director’s Report** **Paper D**

The Deputy Director of Finance spoke to the Quarter 2 forecast which showed an operating surplus to date of £20m, £1m adverse to the profiled forecast to date and £9m favourable to the full year budgeted operating surplus of £11m. This indicated an unrestricted surplus of 2% of gross income, which was the minimum criteria set by Court and was a narrow margin for investment in University operations to meet the aspirations in the planning round. The uncertainty as a result of the USS pension position and potential financial impact was noted, which further underlined the importance of reducing costs and driving up income generation to maintain sustainability.

- 8 Distance Learning at Scale** **Paper E**

The Executive considered a paper setting out the proposed governance model for the first phase of the Distance Learning at Scale Programme, which is a pilot aimed at building, testing and proving the University’s and its partners’ capability and capacity to deliver distance learning. Whilst content with the governance approach, a detailed business case was required to ensure it was appropriate to continue to scale up distance learning and it was noted that this was being developed.

**9 Employee Loan Facility**

**Paper F**

The Executive approved the proposed employee loan facility via the preferred supplier but requested there was further consideration given to earlier support and financial advice for staff facing financial challenges.

**10 Health and Safety Quarter 2 Report**

**Paper G**

The report was noted.

**ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

**11 University Executive Communications**

The key messages arising from the meeting to be communicated more broadly were noted.

**12 Dates of Next Meeting**

The University Executive will next meet on Monday 14 May 2018 at 10 am in the Raeburn Room, Old College.