



**UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE**

**11 June 2018**

**Minute**

- Present:** Peter Mathieson (Convener)  
David Argyle, Ewen Cameron, Leigh Chalmers, Chris Cox, Gavin Douglas, Hugh Edmiston, David Gray, Gavin McLachlan, Phil McNaull, Theresa Merrick, Dorothy Miell, Andrew Morris, Jane Norman, David Robertson, James Saville, Jonathan Seckl, Tracey Slaven, Sarah Smith and Moira Whyte.
- In attendance:** Pauline Jones, Head of Strategic Performance and Policy Research (for item 6), Eleri Connick, EUSA President and Kai O'Doherty, Vice-President Welfare, EUSA (for item 8), Zoe Tupling, Fiona Boyd and Kirstie Graham.
- Apologies:** Charlie Jeffery, David Robertson, Richard Kenway, Jeremy Robbins, James Smith and Gary Jebb.

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Principal welcomed Theresa Merrick, recently appointed Director of Communications and Marketing to her first meeting of the University Executive and announced that James Saville had been appointed as Director of Human Resources.

**1 Minute Paper A**

The Minute of the meeting held on 14 May 2018 was approved.

**2 Principal's Communications**

The Principal reported on the following: the intention that the University Executive be the main decision making forum of the University; the University and College Union (UCU) and Universities UK (UUK) Joint Expert Panel had been convened with nominated UCU and UUK representatives and independent Chair Joanne Segars OBE; the external environment in relation to Brexit remained uncertain, Edinburgh recently hosted the League of European Universities (LERU) Rectors' meeting which was lobbying for access to EU research funding post Brexit; a combined £55m grant had been awarded by the Medical Research Council to the Institute of Genetics and Molecular Medicine, warm congratulations to all concerned on securing this; and the University was number 18 in the QS World University Rankings 2019.

**STRATEGIC ITEMS**

**4 Student Residential Accommodation Strategy Paper B**

The Director of Corporate Services spoke to his paper setting out the second phase of the residential accommodation strategy, noting that

accommodation was an important component of the overall student experience. The paper set out a practical plan to deliver accommodation for the next five years and also set out the wider context in terms of issues such as engagement with the City and local communities, the student social mix and transportation links.

The Executive reiterated support for the accommodation guarantee for first year undergraduates and postgraduates. There was consensus that there would continue to be significant pressure on the accommodation market in Edinburgh, a recognition that students prefer University owned and run accommodation and discussion of the need to integrate study space and to consider student demographics and transport links in considering accommodation at sites outwith the city, such as at Easter Bush.

The Executive endorsed the direction of travel set out in the paper to supplement the existing residential offer by procuring additional accommodation.

## **5 Integrated Transport Plan**

**Paper C**

There was discussion of the need to work in partnership with the City and transport providers to develop an integrated approach to transport and a recognition that more work is required on developing a transport strategy. It was noted that a group has been set up to undertake a root and branch review to develop sustainable options and there would be a further report to the Executive in due course.

## **OPERATIONAL ITEMS**

## **6 Industrial action: addressing student disadvantage**

**Paper F**

The Executive considered a proposal to spend £1.35 million (funds not spent on salaries as a result of strike action) on support for students and it was agreed there should be further discussion with student representatives in agreeing the most effective use of these funds.

## **7 REF2021 strategy and preparations update**

**Paper D**

The Executive agreed that the University should submit 100% of eligible academic staff to REF2021 and noted the next steps in the process of REF preparation: the development of a Code of Practice on output selection for REF2021 inclusion, the continuation of a Mock REF across the University and the development by the REF Board of a set of criteria for success of joint submissions.

- 8 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Paper E**
- The implications of entering the TEF, as well as proposals to introduce a new subject level element were discussed. Whilst noting the decision not to enter TEF taken by Court in December 2016, scenarios of how the University would fare if it were to enter TEF had been explored. Modelling indicated that a number of areas for improvement still exist, and identified a number of actions which could be taken to improve any likely rating. The Executive concluded that many of these actions around employability and the student experience were good practice that should be undertaken regardless of any decision to enter TEF.
- 9 Gujarat Biotechnology Knowledge Complex Paper G**
- The Executive considered an early discussion paper on negotiations with the Government of Gujarat (GoG) and the Institute of Infrastructure, Technology, Research and Management (IITRAM) to develop a Biotechnology Knowledge Complex (BKC). It was noted that a group led from the College of Science & Engineering was progressing negotiations with GoG and IITRAM and a delegation was visiting the University in the summer to sign a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding. There was discussion of the benefits of linking to industry, the strategic importance of working with India and the need to ensure that there was an understanding of any existing links with India and that inhouse expertise and support was used appropriately to progress this initiative.
- 10 Review of Support for Disabled Students Paper H**
- The Executive considered a progress report on recommendations on the review of support for disabled students which took place in 2016/17. This focused on two areas; the implementation of adjustments which means changing their status from 'recommendation' to 'mandatory requirement', and the accessibility of the estate. It was noted that progress was being made on both of these and that funding had been allocated for an action plan to address any areas of inaccessibility which emerged from the review.
- 11 Finance Director's Report Paper I**
- The Director of Finance spoke to the report, highlighting that the quarterly rolling forecast meetings were proving beneficial in providing a clearer comparison against actual performance.
- 12 Investment Landscape & Supporting Advisory Groups Paper J**
- The Executive noted the paper setting out the governance processes for industry engagement, social and environmental investments.

**13 Distance Learning at Scale Programme Business Case Paper K**

The Executive agreed that the proposed pilots would go ahead, subject to approval via the planning round and noted that there would be further discussion on scalability at a future meeting

**14 Risk Management Progress Report Paper L**

The Executive noted the general update on ongoing work to enhance risk management processes. Members were alerted to the proposed changes to the University's Statement of Risk Appetite. Options were being explored to fund the emerging priorities of the Estates Capital Plan and the Statement of Risk Appetite was being reviewed in parallel in relation to gearing and cash reserves. This would require formal approval through Audit and Risk Committee and Policy and Resources Committee to Court

**The following items were considered by email circulation:**

**15 University Leadership Forum Paper M**

The proposal to develop and launch a University of Edinburgh Leaders Forum was noted.

**16 Corporate Parenting Plan progress report Paper N**

The Corporate Parenting plan progress report, for publication on the University's website, was noted.

**17 Workplace Nurseries Paper O**

The proposal for the implementation of a Workplace Nursery scheme as set out in the paper was approved.

**18 Ethical Fundraising Advisory Group Annual Report Paper P**

The Ethical Fundraising Advisory Group (EFAG) Annual Report 2017/18 was noted.

**19 Prevent Duty Update Paper Q**

The update on the implementation of the Prevent duty, to be presented to Court on 18 June, was noted.

**20 Interim Web Accessibility Policy Paper R**

The Interim Web Accessibility Policy was approved.

**21 Lecture Recording Policy** **Paper S**

The Lecture Recording Policy approved by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee on 23 May 2018 and that the Combined Joint Consultative and Negotiative Committee will be asked to endorse the policy on 12 June 2018 for introduction in 2018/2019 was noted.

**22 Learning Analytics Policy** **Paper T**

The Learning Analytics Policy was noted.

**23 Central Bioresearch Services (CBS)/Veterinary Scientific Services (VSS): merger or services under on new name** **Paper U**

That the CBS/VSS departments had recently combined under the name 'Bioresearch & Veterinary Services' (BVS) was noted.

**24 Date of next meeting**

The University Executive will next meet on Tuesday 28 August at 10.00am in the Project Room, 50 George Square.