



**UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE**

**20 November 2018**

**Minute**

- Present:** Peter Mathieson (Convener)  
David Argyle, Eleri Connick, Chris Cox, Gavin Douglas, Hugh Edmiston,  
Gary Jebb, Charlie Jeffery, Gavin McLachlan, Wendy Loretto,  
Theresa Merrick, Dorothy Miell, Jane Norman, Dave Robertson,  
James Saville, Jonathan Seckl, Sarah Smith and Moira Whyte.
- In attendance:** Anne Payne (for item 7), Lisa Dawson and Colan Mehaffey (for item 8),  
Lee Hamill, Fiona Boyd and Kirstie Graham.
- Apologies:** Leigh Chalmers, David Gray, Richard Kenway, Phil McNaull, Andrew Morris,  
Tracey Slaven and James Smith.

**1 Minute Paper A1**

The Minute of the meeting held on 22 October 2018 was approved.

**2 Matters Arising Paper A2**

The Action Log was noted.

**2.1 Core Systems Procurement Update Verbal**

The Chief Information Officer provided an update on progress and timelines, with final approval anticipated via Court Exception Committee in January.

**3 Principal's Communications Verbal**

The Principal reported on the following: an update on the senior team away days on 1 and 2 November, particularly the refocusing of the direct reports group as the 'Senior Leadership Team', discussions on strategic priorities and on the creation of community; the staff survey results, the findings of which would be initially discussed at the Leaders Forum; the ongoing uncertainty around Brexit; plans to refocus the 'International Ventures Group', to consider overseas partnerships across the University; a recent visit to USA which identified potential for enhanced alumni engagement; and success in research awards, which were now over £400m for the first time.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **4.1 Student Experience Project Plan**

### **Paper B1**

At its September meeting, the Executive considered a draft 'student experience action plan' in response to the disappointing 2018 National Student Survey results. Members had welcomed the draft but were concerned that the actions alone may not be sufficient to deliver the deep seated culture change required. The action plan had been further worked up into a multi-year project plan with four main areas of work: actions to enhance the student experience; actions to enhance the staff experience; an underpinning strand of communications; and an underpinning strand that strengthens leadership capacity to deliver culture change. The Executive was asked to consider whether it had the appetite to take on such a comprehensive programme and to recognise the time and resource implications of this.

There was broad ranging support for the proposal, recognising there was further work required on focus and prioritisation and issues around leadership across all levels. The plan will go to December Court for noting and the next steps will be to establish a Standing Committee of University Executive to oversee delivery, chaired by the Senior Vice-Principal and to develop associated costings, noting that if this is a key strategic priority then resource needs to follow and this should inform the capital prioritisation discussions. A more focused Project Plan, with more information on resources, will return to the Executive in the new year.

### **4.2 Teaching and Academic Careers Project**

### **Paper B2**

In May 2018 the University Executive agreed to establish a Teaching and Academic Careers task group to review recognition, reward and support for teaching in academic careers. The task group consulted extensively and while there was strong support for the objective of giving teaching parity with research, there was a lack of support for a separate teaching track, with the preferred option a more flexible mainstream academic pathway where staff could move from teaching, to teaching and research, or research only, at different points in their career. Based on the results of the consultation, a revised set of Principles were developed to use as the basis for looking at policies and procedures.

There was discussion of the consultation findings, with a concern that by excluding a teaching track, there was a risk of 'more of the same' and this therefore placed focus on implementation, with a clarity of expectation and evidence. The Executive approved the Principles, enabling the task group to begin phase two of its work, which will involve coordinating a review of how the Principles should be translated into policy/procedures and academic development practice, whilst noting the concerns about achieving meaningful change of perceptions. A final report will be submitted to the University Executive seeking approval for any proposed changes by the end of 2018-19.

#### **4.3 Areas for development from Quality Reviews**

**Paper B3**

The Executive noted the areas for further development identified through annual monitoring, review and reporting processes, noting these echoed the themes in the Student Experience Project Plan.

#### **5 Family Friendly Employment Policies**

**Paper C**

The Executive considered the findings of a desk-based review of Russell Group university 'family friendly' policies to decide its comparator stance (median, upper quartile or upper decile) and agree any corresponding enhancements to its 'family friendly' policies.

The Executive approved the increase in Maternity/Adoption and Surrogacy Pay from 16 weeks full pay to 18 weeks, to reflect the Russell Group median. It was agreed that Shared Parental Leave would also increase in line with Maternity/Adoption and Surrogacy Pay, whilst noting the low take up of this across the University. There was also discussion of a proposed change to Time Off for Dependants/Carers Leave and it was agreed that this would require further consideration of the appropriate wording before it returned to the Executive.

#### **6 Staff Survey**

**Verbal**

The Executive noted that 6,600 staff members had responded to the first staff survey and the results provided a wealth of data that had been disseminated across the University, with the first stage of consideration to be a discussion at the Leaders Forum.

#### **7 Partnership with the Government of Gujarat: Gujarat Biotechnology University**

**Paper D**

At the June 2018 Executive meeting, members had early sight of an outline proposal for a Biotechnology Knowledge Complex initiative with the Government of Gujarat (GoG). This had now developed into a proposal for a strategic partnership between the University and GoG to create a new, small, specialist HEI to deliver industry-focused training and research that will help to stimulate economic growth in Biotechnology. The GoG want to engage the University to deliver the academic programme and overall leadership to establish the new institution, with the aim of building capacity to create an institute of excellence that can eventually stand alone, or evolve into a more equal collaborating partnership with University.

It was noted that the proposed partnership was in line with emerging strategy and ambitions in biotechnology teaching, research and industry engagement. Members welcomed the industry engagement and noted the support from the College of Science and Engineering, with biotechnology an identified area of growth for the College, which would

also welcome the foothold in India. Recognising the opportunities, the need for further due diligence and a fully costed business case was agreed, and this should be progressed through the International Ventures Group in the first instance. As this was a novel and potentially contentious arrangement, it would also require Court approval if it progressed to a formal proposal.

## **8 Digital Transformation**

**Verbal**

The Executive received a short presentation from Information Services Group and Student Systems and Administration on significant developments in digital transformation with specific focus on MyEd. The Executive welcomed the more personalised approach being taken with MyEd, putting the student in control and ensuring they are in receipt of the right information at the right time, with the project due to be rolled out by mid 2019.

## **9 Finance Director's Report**

**Paper E**

The Executive approved the University's first Anti-Money laundering policy, in compliance with the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (information on the Payer) Regulations 2017.

The draft Annual Report and Accounts to 31 July 2018 were noted, noting the operational surplus had reduced and there would need to be an increase in income generation to fund all the strategic priorities. The progress in moving towards integrated reporting, to position finance as an enabler for the University's academic mission was noted and members commended the quality of the report. Phil McNaul was thanked for his service to the University as Director of Finance.

## **10 Any Other Business**

It was noted that there were a number of items on the 'formal approval or noting' section of the agenda that would benefit from consideration and it was agreed to hold an additional meeting in December to enable this. *Post meeting note:* the following items subsequently progressed to 3 December Court and were approved: Update on University Social Investments- Progress, Timelines and Next Steps; Modern Slavery Statement.

## **11 Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was subsequently confirmed as Monday 17 December at 10.30am in the Conference Room in ECCI at High School Yards.