



UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

22 October 2019

Minute

**Present:** Sarah Smith (Convener), Peter Mathieson (to item 3)  
David Argyle, Leigh Chalmers, Chris Cox, Sarah Cunningham-Burley,  
Lee Hamill, Colm Harmon (to item 5), Gary Jebb, Richard Kenway (to item 6),  
Theresa Merrick, James Saville, Tracey Slaven, Sandy Tudhope, Andrew  
Wilson and Moira Whyte.

**In attendance:** Dave Gorman (for items 7 & 8), Fiona Boyd and Kirstie Graham.

**Apologies:** Gavin Douglas, Hugh Edmiston, David Gray, Wendy Loretto,  
Gavin McLachlan, Dorothy Miell, Andrew Morris, Dave Robertson,  
Jonathan Seckl and James Smith.

**1 Minute**

**Paper A1**

Colm Harmon Vice Principal Students and Sandy Tudhope, University Lead on Climate Responsibility and Sustainability were welcomed to their first meeting.

The Minute of the meeting held on 23 September 2019 was approved as a correct record.

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

**Paper A2**

There were no outstanding matters arising and the action log was noted.

**3 Principal's Communications**

**Verbal**

The Principal reported:

- With the ongoing Brexit uncertainty, as part of mitigation the University had joined, and was the only UK member of, UNA Europa, which has a mission to create a European inter-university environment;
- Recent visits to Hong Kong and Hainan and the ongoing work with the China Merchants Group, with a paper anticipated for the next Executive meeting;
- Thanks to all the staff who worked tirelessly to manage and mitigate the recent EUCLID system error;
- The visit by the University Chancellor today reflecting her ongoing interest in the work of the University.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**4 UK/EU Undergraduate Student Recruitment Trends & targets 2020/21 Paper B**

The Executive noted the update on the latest recruitment cycle and the environmental drivers on recruitment as an indicator of the need to refine our

recruitment focus. The Executive approved the planning assumptions and targets outlined in the paper for the non-controlled undergraduate intake and the expectation of SIMD20 entrants as part of our commitment to our Widening Participation strategy. The Executive also approved the initiation of a project to prepare for full engagement in Clearing during the 2020/21 undergraduate UCAS cycle, whilst noting the scale of Clearing activity required would depend, programme by programme, on application patterns and conversion from offer to acceptance in the different fee status groups.

## **5 Finance**

### **• Director of Finance's Report**

**Paper E1**

The Executive noted the new format for presentation of the Management Accounts and members welcomed the clear executive summary and consistent format for budget areas. There was discussion on the new format, with members encouraged to feedback any specific comments to the finance team.

The summary of the September Audit Scotland titled "Finances of Scottish universities" was considered and the level of differentiation across the sector was noted as an important policy message.

### **• Value for Money Report**

**Paper E2**

The Executive approved the Value for Money report for 2018/19, to be forwarded to Audit and Risk Committee as part of the mandatory requirements from SFC.

## **6 People**

### **• Reward and (Individual) Employee Relations Policies**

**Paper F1**

The Executive noted the current work to update and improve the University's policies on: job grading, job regrading and academic promotions; and the management of absence, probation, discipline, grievance and employment related appeals procedures. The work is intended to standardise and simplify the policies and procedures to ensure greater transparency and fairness for all staff. In order to inform the work, the Executive was asked to provide a steer.

There was wide ranging discussion in which the proposed approach was supported and the following issues raised for consideration:

- Bullying and harassment is an area where the University could do further work and effective employee relations policies could support this work.
- There was endorsement for the need to review the grievance and discipline policies and that indicative timescales, early intervention and a triage system for grievances could be helpful in addressing issues at an earlier stage. This highlighted the importance of effective communication of policies and also of all the options available, such as mediation.

- It was important that processes do not assume guilt and support all sides involved fairly and equally. The issue of management capacity was raised with the need for appropriate support and training.
- There was debate about whether it was appropriate to have different probation periods for academic and professional serves staff and broad support for upholding a 'one University' ethos and for keeping probationary periods as short as practical.

## • **Technicians Commitment Update**

**Paper F2**

The Executive noted the first career development programme for technicians was launched on 30 September 2019, providing a framework of guidance, development and support for staff in technical roles to help them build and maintain professional skills and manage their own career development. The work of all involved was commended as an exemplar of staff taking ownership of their career development with support provided by University.

## **7 Investing for Good – A Social Enterprise and Social Investment Strategy for the University**

**Paper C**

The Executive considered a draft Social Enterprise and Social Investment Strategy, noting that following Court approval in summer 2017 of the principle of investing in social investments, work had been ongoing to progress the overall approach, including the formation of an Environmental, Social and Governance Advisory Group, chaired by the Director of Corporate Services.

In discussion, members raised the following areas:

- The definition of 'young people' to align with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (up to 26<sup>th</sup> birthday) and to include consideration of safeguarding.
- Consideration of aligning the strategy with the UN Sustainable Development Goals as their adoption by the University evolves.
- Listing the membership of the Environmental, Social and Governance Advisory Group and reviewing this to consider whether it is appropriately representative and diverse, and has sufficient knowledge of social enterprise.
- Giving greater consideration of, and reference to, the risk of unintended consequences and associated reputational management, given the often complex and unpredictable nature of this area.

Subject to the above suggestions, the Executive welcomed the proposed Strategy and approved it progressing through Policy and Resources Committee to Court.

## **8 Towards a Circular Economy – Equipment assets reuse and resale process**

**Paper D**

The Executive supported the process set out in the paper and suggested user guidance (split between University funded and research grant funded assets) and perhaps worked examples to simplify what is a complex process for users.

## **ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

**9      Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee – Terms of Reference      Paper K**

The Executive considered the terms of reference for the new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, requested that an alumni function representative was included in the membership and there was a minor re-wording to reflect considering whether to seek charter status, and subject to these minor amendments the terms of reference were welcomed and approved.

**10    Closure of Agreed Management Actions from Internal Audit      Paper G**

The Executive noted the increase in open management actions and members were encourage to engage with internal audit to facilitate closure of open actions within their areas of responsibility.

**11    Annual Ethical Fundraising Advisory Group Report 2018/19      Paper H**

The Executive noted the annual report on the activity of the Group in academic year 2018/19.

**12    Health and Safety Report Quarter 4: 1 June 2019 – 31 August 2019      Paper I**

The Executive noted the summary of health and safety related incidents that took place during the period 1 June 2019 to 31 August 2019 and relevant health and safety issues and developments.

**13    Staff Experience Committee Report      Paper J**

The Executive noted the report from the first meeting of the Staff Experience Committee on 27 August 2019.

**14    Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 19 November 2019 at 10 am in the Raeburn Room.