THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

19 November 2019

Minute

Present: Peter Mathieson (Convener)
David Argyle, Leigh Chalmers, Chris Cox, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Gavin Douglas, Hugh Edmiston, Lee Hamill, Colm Harmon, Gary Jebb, Richard Kenway, Gavin McLachlan, Dorothy Miell, Theresa Merrick, Dave Robertson, James Saville, Jonathan Seckl, Tracey Slaven, James Smith, Sarah Smith, Sandy Tudhope, Andrew Wilson and Moira Whyte.

In attendance: Alan Mackay (for item 7), Fiona Boyd and Kirstie Graham.

Apologies: David Gray, Wendy Loretto and Andrew Morris.

1	**Minute**	**Paper A1**

The Minute of the meeting held on 22 October 2019 was approved as a correct record.

2	**Matters Arising & Review of Action Log**	**Paper A2**

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

3	**Principal's Communications**	**Verbal**

The Principal reported:
- The planned UCU industrial action over both pay and pensions with the University seeking to minimise the impact on students;
- The uncertainty in the external environment is reflected in the upcoming General Election and lack of clarity on Brexit;
- The University has recalled its students in Hong Kong and they are all home or on their way home;
- Strategy 2030 had been published and work was now ongoing to translate the vision and values into actions;
- A recent visit to North America, with alumni meetings in New York and Washington and the potential for further engagement;
- Two excellent recruitments, with Shannon Vallor appointed to the Baillie Gifford Chair of the Ethics of Data and Artificial Intelligence and a prestigious appointment to be shortly announced to the Higgs Chair of Theoretical Physics;
- The College of Science and Engineering will be seeking Court approval for capital investment in a proposed FASTBLADE Structural Fatigue Facility in Rosyth, providing an opportunity to build engagement with heavy industry in the region;

- An early update on the current admissions cycle, reminding members of the importance of collectively committing to recruit within the agreed plans while acting to ensure strengthening of intake diversity.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4   Student Support and Personal Tutor Project - Update   Paper B

The Executive had agreed a review of student support and this had been taken forward with extensive consultation. The Executive was now asked to consider the broad direction of travel to inform the final proposal.

Feedback had identified the value of the academic staff and student relationship while highlighting the need to make best use of specialised professional services. What was emerging was a model that consisted of a baseline that should be applied consistently across all schools. Over and above this, schools could add additional roles and services. The intention was to free up academic time to focus on academic duties; provide greater consistency of support across schools; and provide more specialist support through professional services staff.

There was wide ranging discussion that broadly supported the direction of travel with comments including: the challenge of balancing flexibility with consistency as local flexibility may lead to perceived inconsistency of support; the potential cost of increased professional services and the challenge of realising the academic time savings; the equality and diversity impact assessment needed be integral to developing the model; welfare and support services for students needed to be accessible in terms of location and timing.

The team would continue to develop the details of the model and a prepare a high-level business case, for approval at a future meeting.

5   Sustainable IT: Personal Computing Devices Policy   Paper C

The Executive considered the proposed Sustainable IT: Personal Computing Devices Policy, which aims to ensure staff have the computing devices needed to do their roles while reducing the carbon and environmental damage of the University's personal computing devices and the overall cost to the University of these devices; and the associated software, maintenance and power costs. The Executive approved the Policy, noting the importance of effective communication before implementation and roll out in the new year.

6   Director of Finance's Report   Paper D

The Executive noted the Annual Report and Accounts for 2018-19 prior to submission to Audit and Risk Committee for review and recommendation to Court. There was discussion of the overall sector position, the need to create headroom to deliver the University's strategy and capital plan and the importance of careful messaging of the headline performance.

7   Major International Collaborations Update   Paper P

The Executive considered an update on the University's current portfolio of major international collaborations, noting the University is involved in a wide range of collaborations and the scale and location of international collaborations of all types continues to grow and diversify. There was discussion of the need for a more strategic approach to international partnerships, to mitigate the risk of exposure and ensure a balanced geographical portfolio of collaborations and it was agreed it may be beneficial to discuss at a future meeting.

8   Original Edinburgh – Old Town Business Improvement District   Paper E

The Executive noted the proposed Business Improvement District (BID) for the Old Town (Original Edinburgh) and approved the recommendation that the University votes 'yes' in the ballot and supported further engagement with Original Edinburgh should the ballot be successful.

9   Delegated Authority Schedule   Paper F

The Executive considered proposed updates to the Delegated Authority Schedule (DAS), noting that this was largely a restructure to support core system implementation. There was discussion of the levels for capital authorisation in the light of the capital plan and comments would be considered before progressing to Policy and Resources Committee to recommend to Court for approval.

10   University Internal and External Spend on Hotels   Paper G

The Executive agreed that all staff should be encouraged to use internal hotel services when booking hotel and conference accommodation in Edinburgh, noting the quality and availability of the offer and that this ensured spend was retained within the University.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL

11   Global Access Edinburgh Scholarships   Paper H

The Executive approved a pilot widening participation scholarship scheme, using fee remission as the mechanism for the University contribution to the scholarship for up to 15 international undergraduate students.

12   Fee Strategy Group   Paper I

The Executive approved the student accommodation rents for 2020/21 and noted the indicative rent increase for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and the routine fees approved by Chair's Action. It was noted that Andrew Wilson, EUSA President, did not approve the rent increases and that EUSA welcomed the planned strategic review of accommodation to inform future rent setting.

13   Modern Slavery Statement   **Paper J**

The Executive approved the Modern Slavery Statement 2018/19, to progress to
Audit and Risk Committee for recommendation to Court.

14   Annual Procurement Report   **Paper K**

The Executive approved the Annual Procurement Report 2018/19.

15   Annual Strategic Risk Report Update   **Paper L**

The Executive approved the first update to the Annual Strategic Risk Management
Report, to progress to Audit and Risk Committee.

ITEMS FOR NOTING

16   Strategic Plan Performance Measurement Framework   **Paper M**

The Executive noted the University's performance against the measures for 2018-19
agreed for the Strategic Plan 2016. A new performance framework would be
developed to measure progress against the Strategy 2030.

17   Learning Analytics: Pilot of OnTask Data-Driven Feedback Tool   **Paper N**

The Executive noted the planned pilot of a data driven feedback tool (OnTask) within
distance learning (online) and campus (blended and online) courses.

18   Student Experience Committee Report   **Paper O**

The Executive noted an update on the work of the Standing Committee on Student
Experience in the current academic year.

19   Outcome Agreement   **Paper Q**

The Executive noted the process to be followed and issues for consideration in the
production of the University's Outcome Agreement for 2020-21.

20   University Executive Communications

There was discussion on the most effective method of communicating the key
messages from the Executive meeting, with further consideration to be given to this.

21   Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 17 December 2019 at 10 am in the
Raeburn Room.