



UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

21 July 2020

Minute

Present: Peter Mathieson (Convener)
David Argyle, Leigh Chalmers, Chris Cox, Sarah Cunningham-Burley,
Gavin Douglas, David Gray, Lee Hamill, Colm Harmon, Gary Jebb,
Richard Kenway, Catherine Martin, Gavin McLachlan, Ellen MacRae, Dorothy
Miell, Theresa Merrick, Andrew Morris, Dave Robertson,
James Saville, Jonathan Seckl, Aziz Sheikh, Tracey Slaven, James Smith,
Sarah Smith and Sandy Tudhope.

Apologies: Wendy Loretto and Moira Whyte

In attendance: Mike Shipston (for item 6), Antony Maciocia (for item 12), Fiona Boyd and
Kirstie Graham.

1 Minute

Paper A1, Paper A2

The Minute of the meeting held on 16 June 2020 and the electronic meeting
concluding 3 July 2020 were approved.

2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log

Paper A3

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

3 Principal's Communications

Verbal

The Principal reported on:

- The preparation for a return to campus following Scottish Government guidelines, with a further update anticipated on social distancing, whilst recognising staff concerns and the possibility of another outbreak;
- Cautious optimism on student numbers, both undergraduate and postgraduate for all intakes across home, EU, rUK and international as things stand, but continuing uncertainty makes this difficult to call;
- The outcome of the Research Sustainability Task Force and the package of measures from the Westminster government to support research in UK Universities;
- The forthcoming Scottish Government commissioned review by the Scottish Funding Council on the sustainability and coherence of tertiary education;
- The already ongoing work on anti-racism that had been accelerated by Black Lives Matter and the importance of ensuring all of the University community were engaged in addressing this.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4 Director of Finance's Report

Paper B

The Director of Finance reported the latest University management accounts position to the end of May, noting the trend for a difference between the actual and forecast position showed the continued challenge of accurate forecasting. He noted that, although the University was showing a surplus, this was dependent on City Deal and restricted donations and the University did not generate the 3-5% operating surplus through its own activities necessary to invest sustainably in achieving the priorities in Strategy 2030. This indicated that the cost saving measures agreed through the Adaptation and Renewal team and approved by the Executive remained essential.

There was an update on Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) benchmarking information for 2016-17 to 2018-19 comparing our full economic cost recovery rates for teaching and research with our peer group and the wider UK sector, which showed that publically funded research and teaching was becoming less efficient at Edinburgh, with costs increasing at a greater rate than income.

There was discussion of the recent announcement by the Scottish Government on funding EU undergraduate students, the impact of pensions movement on the published surplus and the need for clear communication to staff of the importance of continuing with the agreed cost saving actions.

5 Covid-19 – Tuition Fee Setting 2021/22

Paper C

The Executive homologated the tuition fee changes approved by the Student Recruitment and Fee Strategy Group for the MBChB and the Veterinary Medicine Programmes for 2021/22.

The Executive considered the issues in setting fees for 2021/22 entrants, noting that compliance with consumer legislation requires publication of undergraduate tuition fees before UCAS opens for applications at the start of September, with the postgraduate cycle broadly aligned to the same timetable. There was discussion of ensuring fees were competitive, while maximising income and an ongoing commitment to widening participation for international and postgraduate intake as well as undergraduate. Based on this, the Convenor of the Student Recruitment Fee Strategy Group, in consultation with the Principal will confirm the percentage change in non-regulated fees prior to opening of the UCAS system for applications at the beginning of September.

6 Postgraduate Programmes at the Zhejiang-Edinburgh Institute

Paper D

The Dean of Biomedical Sciences spoke to the proposal to deliver University of Edinburgh only MSc and PhD on-campus degrees at the Zhejiang-Edinburgh Joint Institute (ZJE) Institute, Zhejiang International Campus, Haining, China. It was noted that this provided a new strategic model to potentially explore Transnational Education (TNE) and could serve as a pilot for the concept of single award (UoE) degrees with trusted and established international partners. By embedding within an existing Joint Institute model based at Zhejiang University International campus this

was not a potential Campus abroad. UoE MSc and PhD programmes delivered at ZJE would follow existing UoE procedures, policies and student supervision practices and students would be UoE students, paying fees directly to the University, while based predominantly at ZJE during their programmes. It supported more direct exchange of PG students between Edinburgh and ZJE and provided a pathway for China based students to start their MSc/PhD at ZJE, if unable to travel due to COVID-19 restrictions. It was noted that this proposal was contingent on China Ministry of Education approval

The Executive was supportive of the proposal and the fee structure, while noting that this would require Court approval, potentially through Exception Committee over the summer, with authority delegated to the Principal for signing off the implementation of the arrangements in consultation with the Director of Legal Services

7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report

Paper E1

The Executive considered the report from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and supported the emerging priorities of: a robust approach to mainstreaming; a central online presence; a strategic approach to the Equality Calendar involving staff and student groups in planning and delivering events; and reviewing commitments to equality charters. The work of the race equality and anti-racism subgroup was noted and the priorities of: ensuring that the Counselling service provides Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students and staff with access to BAME counsellors should they wish to see one; ensuring our report and support mechanisms are fit for purpose to enable reporting of racism and racial harassment with appropriate support and feedback to those reporting; decolonising the curriculum; addressing the achievement and attainment gap and beginning to tackle the underrepresentation of BAME staff, particularly in Professional Services. There was discussion of resource and recognition, with budget holders asked to support embedding these priorities through the planning round and through work allocation.

• Renaming David Hume Tower

Paper E2

The Executive noted that there had been a petition calling for the re-naming of the David Hume Tower on George Square, signed by around 1700 people. This was in the context of the Black Lives Matter protests, which had highlighted ongoing consideration of commemoration on University campuses and in other public spaces. It was noted that the City of Edinburgh is dealing with similar issues, with the Melville Monument that commemorates Henry Dundas being contextualised with a plaque and dedicated to victims of the slave trade. The Council is setting up an independent review group to deliberate on the potential renaming/removal of public statues, monuments, street and building names and this group will include several Edinburgh academics.

In discussion it was noted that the University had a complex relationship with David Hume, having refused to employ him in his lifetime and his legacy belonged as much to the City and the nation as part of the Scottish Enlightenment, so the views of the broader community locally and internationally were important in forming any

decision. It was agreed that it was important to take action, while recognising the priority was to progress the work to address current race equality and anti-racism measures. This would be discussed further with the University Court and the City of Edinburgh review group and other stakeholders to inform the final decision.

• **Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition** **Paper E3**

The Executive agreed to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition, make this public and use the definition when an allegation of anti-Semitism is being taken forward under the Code of Student Conduct or staff disciplinary policies.

8 Student Case Review Procedure **Paper F**

The Executive approved the principles behind the proposed Student Case Review Procedure, noting there would be further discussion with Legal Services before the final version was ready for approval.

9 Adaptation and Renewal Team Report **Paper G**

The Executive approved an extension of the process to approve decisions between meetings for three months to 30 September 2020.

There was discussion of possible changes to the timetabling day and week to accommodate social distancing on return to campus. It was noted that if the Scottish Government continued to require 2 metres social distancing, this would enable face to face delivery of only around 20% of the curriculum. There had been a University-wide consultation and the consensus was not to extend the teaching day to start at 8.00am or to Saturday. By extending the teaching day to 8.00pm and teaching on Wednesday afternoon, face to face teaching could be increased under the current social distancing requirement and if the social distancing requirement were reduced, nearer 60% would be achievable without needing to extend the teaching day beyond the addition of Wednesday afternoons. The Executive was supportive of the proposed approach and noticed there was some urgency in the Scottish Government clarifying the social distancing requirements as timetabling required to commence in the next ten days.

10 People Report **Paper H**

The Executive noted the update on people related matters.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

11 Amendments to Student Contract **Paper I**

The University Executive approved the proposed amendments to the Student Contract in light of changes to legislation and the challenges posed by COVID-19.

12 Update on the University of Edinburgh Doctoral College **Paper J**

The Executive noted the development of the Doctoral College since approving the 'soft-launch' in January 2020.

13 Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group **Paper K**

The Executive noted the update from Student Recruitment Fee Strategy Group.

14 Research Policy Group **Paper L**

The Executive noted the Research Policy Group report for 2019/20 and approved its revised Terms of Reference.

15 People and Money System and Finance/HR Transformation Update **Paper M**

The Executive noted the update on the People and Money System, Finance Transformation and Human Resources Transformation Programmes

16 Health and Safety Quarterly Report: Quarter 3 **Paper N**

The Executive noted the summary of health and safety related incidents that took place during the period 1 March to 31 May 2020, as well as relevant health and safety issues and developments.

17 Internal Audit – Open Management Actions **Paper O**

The Executive noted the ongoing management actions arising from Internal Audit reviews.

18 Update on Roslin Technologies Ltd **Paper P**

The Executive noted an update on developments at Roslin Technologies Limited.

19 University Executive Communications **Verbal**

The Executive agreed there would be communication on Adaptation and Renewal, Equality Diversity and Inclusion and the Doctoral College.

20 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 18 August 2020 at 10 am.