

**APPROVED  
CIRCULATED**

**AB(15/16)40**

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY COURT  
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 26 February 2016 at 9.00 am in  
the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

**PRESENT:**

Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); Professor A Sambell (Deputy Vice Chancellor); Dr S Cairncross (Assistant Principal, Student Experience); Dr K Chalmers (School Academic Lead, Quality Enhancement); Mr S Chowdhry (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Dr N Cimini (School of Life, Sport & Social Sciences); Professor L Dryden (School Academic Lead, Research); Dr A Fonzone (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Dr A Gavris (Business School); Ms S Goddard (President, ENSA); Dr J Hails (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Professor E Hart (Professoriate); Dr G Hutchison (Dean, School of Life, Sport and Social Science); Mr R Kemmer (School of Computing); Professor J Kennedy (Dean, Research & Innovation); Ms C Lambert (Director, Student & Academic Services); Mr R Lannon (School Academic Lead, Quality Enhancement); Professor A McCleery (Professoriate); Dr D MacLean (School Academic Lead, Learning & Teaching); Ms P Miller-Judd (Dean, School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr B Neades (School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Professor James O'Kane (Dean, Business School); Professor B Paechter (School Academic Lead, Research); Ms A Sharp (School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Professor I Smith (Dean, School of Engineering & Built Environment); Ms S Smith (Dean, School of computing); Mr D Telford (Director, Information Services); Dr E Theodoraki (Business School).

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

D Cloy (Assistant Secretary); Dr S Logie (Director, School Support Service)

**APOLOGIES:**

Dr M Foster (School Academic Lead, Learning & Teaching); Ms E Hofland (ENSA Rep); Professor T Humphrey (Dean, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care); Mr M Innes (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr Eva Malone (School of Life, Sport & Social Sciences); Ms A McMillan (ENSA Rep); Dr L Muir (School of Computing); Mr P Tar (ENSA Rep); Dr G Webber (University Secretary); Professor B Webster-Henderson (Dean, Learning & Teaching).

**1. WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

1.1 The Convenor welcomed members to the meeting.

1.2 It was noted that elections had been held to fill the remaining vacancies in the Board's membership and that all vacancies had now been filled. Sandeep Chowdhry had been elected from the School of Engineering and the Built Environment, Dr Eva Malone had been elected from the School of Life, Sport and Social Sciences and Professor Alison McCleery had been elected from the Professoriate. It was noted that this was the first meeting of Professor James

O’Kane (Dean of the Business School) and that Dr Steven Logie (Director, School Support Service) was in attendance. The new members were welcomed.

1.3 The apologies were **noted**.

## **PART A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & DECISION**

### **2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2016 AB(15/16)28**

2.1 The minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

### **3. MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 There were no matters arising.

### **4. PRINCIPAL’S REPORT AB(15/16)29**

4.1 The Principal introduced her written report and highlighted the 3.7% reduction in the University’s core Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funding for 2016/17 which, combined with the University’s increasing staff cost base, presented a financially challenging environment. It was noted that this situation had been anticipated and was being managed through the planning and budgeting process.

4.2 The outcomes of the Employee Engagement Survey were also highlighted which showed a positive direction of travel. Work underway to respond to areas of concern through School and Department action planning and the work of the Employee Engagement Action Group were noted. It was also noted that Court had received a presentation from members of the Employee Engagement Action Group at the Court/ULT Strategy Conference event earlier in the week.

4.3 It was noted that the University had received the Queen’s Anniversary Prize for its internationally acclaimed work in timber engineering, sustainable construction and wood science at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace the previous day. It was further noted that a link-up between the University and a Scottish cybersecurity start-up (School of Computing and Payfont) to create a world-first in online security had been named Innovation of the Year at the inaugural Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards.

4.4 Congratulations were extended to the Principal on her recent appointment as Convenor of Universities Scotland.

4.5 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

### **5. REPORT ON APPLICATIONS FOR 2016/17 AB(15/16)30**

5.1 Academic Board received the paper which presented an update on UK & EU student applications and the admissions process for the 2016 admissions cycle, based on the position at the end of January. It was noted that there was a slight overall reduction in undergraduate applications (-2%) resulting

from a fall in applications for Nursing and Rest of UK (RUK) students and that recruitment activity was underway to increase applications/conversions from RUK students. Work underway to enhance and streamline the admissions process was also highlighted.

5.2 Following discussion around conversion rates it was agreed that the Board would be circulated with conversion rate figures for the University as a whole and by School following the meeting, and that detailed figures would be provided to the Business School.

5.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

## **6. RESEARCH STRATEGY UPDATE AB(15/16)31**

6.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided an update on progress towards the objectives of the Research Strategy. Preparations and planning for REF 2020 were highlighted along with the mini-REF review that will take place over the summer, as was progress with the Research Management System and investment in Research Studentships.

6.2 Discussion followed during which the use of data from CVs for the Research Management System was clarified, and it was noted that the Dean of Research & Innovation would send out a clarifying message to Schools on this matter. The ambition to include research deliverables within the PDR process was also noted. Thanks were extended to the Dean of Research & Innovation and her team for their work in supporting delivery of the Research Strategy.

6.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

## **7. STUDENT FEEDBACK UPDATE AB(15/16)32**

7.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided an interim update on engagement with the key mechanisms for capturing student feedback to date this academic session. The upcoming audit of Staff Student Liaison Committees was also highlighted.

7.2 Discussion followed during which it was agreed that clarification would be sought from Ipsos MORI regarding timing of NSS phone calls to students, as this had happened earlier than expected this year. Thanks were extended to the Assistant Principal (Student Experience) and her colleagues for their work in this area.

7.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the paper.

## **8. STUDENT EXPERIENCE UPDATE AB(15/16)33**

8.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided an update on progress with priorities identified in the Corporate Plan which underpin the implementation of the Student Experience Strategy: Opportunities Strand. Work underway to attempt to categorise the activities students engage in beyond the classroom was highlighted.

8.2 Academic Board **noted** the update.

## 9. PLANNING PROCESS UPDATE

- 9.1 Academic Board received an update on the planning process and portfolio review, through which Schools were being challenged to rationalise and consolidate their academic portfolio in order to develop areas of strength and release staff time to focus on other areas of strategy delivery. It was noted that this was an ongoing activity which would be built into the planning process each year.
- 9.2 In discussion it was noted that the data regarding the number of programmes was not reliable and that the true number was not as high as the headline figure suggested, nonetheless it was recognised that this remained an issue which needed to be addressed and that it was the responsibility of Schools to take this forward. Activity underway concerning portfolio review in a number of Schools was highlighted. In response to a members' question it was confirmed that the intention of portfolio review was to free up staff time to focus on other areas of strategy delivery, and was not intended to result in redundancies.
- 9.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the update.

## 10. STUDENT APPEALS, COMPLAINTS & CONDUCT: STATISTICS AND ANNUAL REPORT\* AB(15/16)34

- 10.1 Academic Board received the paper which provided the annual report on matters relating to the areas of academic appeals, complaints and student conduct.
- 10.2 Discussion followed during which the value of lessons learned from complaints, along with positive feedback regarding the introduction of the new "Fit to Sit" policy were noted.
- 10.3 Thereafter, Academic Board **noted** the report.

## 11. HONORARY AWARDS\* AB(15/16)35 [Clerk's note: This paper was tabled and collected from members following the meeting]

- 11.1 Academic Board **approved** the Honorary Award nominations recommended by the Honorary Awards Committee for onwards transmission to Court for endorsement.

## PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES

Academic Board received the minutes of the following meetings to confirm that its sub-committees were continuing to meet their remits and were undertaking business on its behalf to the standard it expects.

12. Minutes of Student Experience Committee held on 9 February 2016 AB(15/16)36  
It was noted that there had been an increase in timetabled teaching on Wednesday afternoons which was being addressed. Academic Board's commitment to keep Wednesday afternoons free from teaching wherever possible was re-iterated.
13. Minutes of Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee on 10 AB(15/16)37

February 2016  
The minutes were noted.

14. Minutes of Research & Innovation Committee held on 11 February 2016. **AB(15/16)38**  
Key points from the meeting were highlighted and Professor Alison McCleery's appointment to the prestigious cross-sector position of Deputy Director of the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS) was noted.

## **PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **15. REPORT ON UNIVERSITY KEY RISKS APPROPRIATE TO ACADEMIC BOARD\*** **AB(15/16)39**

- 15.1 The Board **noted** the report which provided the second assessment of confidence in the management of the University's Top Risks for academic year 2015/16.

### **16. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2015/16:**

Noted as 03 June 2016 at 9.00am, Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus.

**\*denotes a paper to which an exemption under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies.**