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AB (19/20) 001

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT**

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on **7 June 2019** at **0900**
in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus

PRESENT: Professor A Sambell (Senior Vice Principal & Deputy Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); Professor A Tobin (Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching); Ms N Graham (Vice Principal for International); Professor N Antonopoulos (Vice Principal of Research and Innovation); Dr J Brodie (School Academic Lead, Learning & Teaching); Dr N Brown (School Academic Lead, Quality Enhancement); Dr S Cairncross (Assistant Principal); Dr A Fonzone (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Mr J Fraser (ENSA President); Dr A Gavris (Business School); Dr G Hutchison (Dean, School of Applied Sciences); Mr M Innes (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Prof S Keates (Dean, School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Dr S Logie (Director, School Support Service & Academic Registrar); Dr D Maclean (Interim Dean, School of Arts & Creative Industries); Dr L Muir (School of Computing); Professor S Smith (Dean, School of Computing); Dr E Theodoraki (Business School).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Bruce (Learning Technology Support Manager) (*item 4 only*); Mr A McGoff (Director of Finance and Operations) (*item 6 only*); Mr D Cloy (University Secretary); Dr C Steen (Clerk); Ms M Masson (Governance Services) (Observer)

APOLOGIES: Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice Chancellor) (Convenor); Mr W Baah (Student Campus Representative, Merchiston); Mrs G Boag (Dean, Business School); Dr N Cimini (School of Applied Sciences); Professor S Dawkes (School Academic Lead, Learning & Teaching); Ms S Ernst (Student Campus Representative, Craiglockhart); Dr J Hails (School of Arts & Creative Industries); Professor E Hart (Professoriate); Professor T Humphrey (Dean, School of Health & Social Care); Professor J Kennedy (Dean, Research & Innovation); Mr R Lannon (School Academic Lead, Quality Enhancement); Dr C Mahoney (School of Health & Social Care); Dr E Malone (School of Applied Sciences); Professor Alison McCleery (Professoriate); Professor B Paechter

(School Academic Lead, Research); Ms A Samra (Student Campus Representative, Sighthill); Mr M Thomson (School of Engineering & the Built Environment); Dr N Urquhart (School of Computing).

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1. The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting. The apologies were noted.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2019 AB(18/19)040

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2019 were approved.
- 2.2. It was confirmed that a discussion had taken place regarding the potential inclusion of international partners in Enhancement-led Institutional Review discussions (paras 2.5 & 2.6).
- 2.3. It was confirmed that work was progressing on the use of database (rather than week) numbers (para 3.2) and that the trimester 1 timetable for 2019/20 had been distributed for comment. A rapid action group had been formed to complete this task.
- 2.4. It was confirmed that the issue relating to loss of applicants to SACI (para 6.5) had been followed up with the School.
- 2.5. Reconsideration of an additional entry point for students (para 7.4) was yet to be actioned.

3. MATTERS ARISING

- a) There were no Matters Arising.

4. LECTURE CAPTURE – PILOT PROJECT Presentation

- 4.1. Members were advised that the project had arisen from a request by the Edinburgh Napier Students' Association to have lectures recorded. The project was about to enter the second year of a pilot and utilised Panopto, a bespoke software solution for lecture capture.
- 4.2. It was noted that a number of classrooms and lecture theatres had received audio visual equipment upgrades which were directly compatible with the Panopto software. Recordings could be edited by academic staff prior to publication.
- 4.3. Use of the system by students was being monitored and it was noted that access to lectures increased immediately prior to

assessment periods as students revised. The average access time (by home students) per video was c.10 minutes, which compared with the national average of c.15 minutes.

- 4.4. Members were advised that the system had been used in c.70 modules over two trimesters and c.1,000 videos had been recorded.
- 4.5. It was recognised that students with learning difficulties and those whose first language was not English benefitted from being able to pause and slow down recordings. Staff had the ability to make content downloadable for viewing offline, to webcast and record simultaneously, and to record material outwith the classroom environment. Access to recordings online was reducing the need for academic staff to travel overseas to deliver lectures.
- 4.6. It was suggested that the presence of cameras and microphones might inhibit staff/student discussion in class and that the availability of recordings might affect classroom attendance (although the available literature suggested otherwise).
- 4.7. Members were advised that the project board that had been overseeing the project would be wound up and responsibility for the project would transfer elsewhere (probably the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee).

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

AB(18/19)041

- 5.1. Members were advised that the report from the Augur Review of post-18 education and funding had been published and had recommended that student fees in England be reduced and loan repayment terms changed. It was noted that these changes, if implemented, would have direct and indirect effects on the Scottish higher education sector, e.g. recruitment of rest of UK students, changes to Barnett formula funding, etc.
- 5.2. The Principal's Report was noted.

6. ANNUAL UNIVERSITY PLAN 2019/20

AB(18/19)042

- 6.1. Members were reminded that the end point for the planning and budgeting round would be the Court meeting on 24 June 2019, when the finalised plan and budget would be submitted for approval.
- 6.2. It was noted that Edinburgh Napier was in a reasonably strong financial state when compared with the Scottish higher education sector, with low borrowings and increasing income

from a variety of sources which had countered the reduction in grant income from the Scottish Funding Council.

- 6.3. Members were advised that a capital budget of c.£7.7m had been approved for 2019/20. A number of capital projects had been identified.
- 6.4. The top priorities in the annual plan were outlined and briefly discussed.
- 6.5. The University Annual Plan 2019/20 was noted.

7. SHAPING OUR FUTURE

AB(18/19)043

- 7.1. Members were reminded that the new University strategy would be short and simple. The strategy would not commit to a specific timescale, but would be supported by delivery plans which would define specific objectives and associated key performance measures.
- 7.2. The new strategy would be submitted to Court for approval in December 2019. It was intended that the strategy would support the current shape of the institution, e.g. a broad-based University with three campuses in Edinburgh and continuing international delivery with partners. Edinburgh Napier would however become more engaged externally with, e.g. business, the third sector, schools and colleges, etc. The University would develop its distinctiveness through further focus on its applied nature, links with professions, development of student employability, etc.
- 7.3. The University had specific academic strengths: nine of its Units of Assessment (UoAs) demonstrate world-leading research: sixteen subject areas were in the upper quartile of the relevant league tables. Development would focus on demonstrating excellence and credibility in subject areas and in taking advantage of the University's relatively small size to be agile, e.g. in developing inter-disciplinary working.
- 7.4. It was suggested that the staff experience should be explicitly mentioned in the strategy. This was agreed. It was also suggested that development of the infrastructure to deliver/ support the strategy should be explicitly mentioned.
- 7.5. The update on progress with development of the University strategy was noted.

8. UPDATE ON MINI-REF

Verbal Report

- 8.1. Members were advised that work was underway to identify external assessors who would conduct reviews of the research environment and impact case studies associated with the REF submission.
- 8.2. A meeting was being arranged specifically to discuss each of the UoAs in detail. An action plan would be agreed for each UoA after consideration of the level and quality of evidence collected and quality of the narrative. It was suggested that a comprehensive report be made to Academic Board at its November 2019 meeting. This was agreed.
- 8.3. The update on preparations for REF was noted.

9. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR SESSION 2019/20

AB(18/19)044

- 9.1. The amendments to the regulations were briefly outlined.
- 9.2. Members were advised of an issue where the authenticity of an applicant's portfolio of work (used in an admission decision) had subsequently been questioned after the applicant had matriculated. It was suggested that the regulations did not cover such an occurrence. The Vice Principal of Learning and Teaching undertook to investigate the matter further with the School of Arts and Creative Industries.
- 9.3. The amendments to the Academic Regulations were approved and the areas for review during 2019/20 were noted.

10. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE QUALITY FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSED CHANGES FOR 2019/20

AB(18/19)045

- 10.1. The report on the effectiveness of the Quality Framework was noted and the following proposed changes to the Quality Framework were approved:
 - Categories of assessment within the module descriptor to be reviewed as part of ongoing work for Student Data Futures;
 - University to fully adopt programme suite/subject area as the unit of institution-led review (including all modes of study and location regardless of date of approval);
 - A mandatory and formal planning meeting twelve months in advance of the Institution-led review to be written into the Quality Framework procedure;

- That Academic Board consider thematic review topics relating to the student experience, which crosscut the schools and professional support services, and
- The School Review methodology be removed from the Quality Framework to allow priority to be given to Institution-led review and Thematic Review, with recognition that consideration will need to be given to the University's approach for reviewing the postgraduate research student experience.

10.2. The Convenor of the Quality & Standards Committee was given authority to sign off the final version of the Quality Framework prior to its publication.

11. ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2023/24

AB(18/19)046

- 11.1. Members were advised that presentation of the calendar had been changed from weeks 1-52 to trimester and trimester week. This was thought to be less confusing.
- 11.2. It was noted there were a number of terms being used to describe the first week of the academic year (i.e. Fresher's Week, Week 1, Starter Week). The Director of the School Support Service undertook to investigate and suggest a common term to be used across the institution.
- 11.3. The Academic Year calendar for 2023/24 was approved.

12. ACADEMIC BOARD CONSTITUTION AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(i) Changes to School Academic Leadership Roles: Academic Board Constitution and Sub Committee Amendment

AB(18/19)047

- 12.1. Following consideration of the proposal, it was agreed to further amend the wording of the constitution to replace members elected by and from among the School Academic Leads (SALs) for Quality Enhancement with members elected by and from among the senior officers responsible for Quality Enhancement in each School, recognising that not all Schools would retain these existing SAL roles to lead on Quality Enhancement.
- 12.2. The constitution of Academic Board was approved for onward transmission to Court with the change detailed in 12.1 above.
- 12.3. The proposed amendments to the terms of reference of Academic Board's sub-committees were approved.

(ii) **Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and Student Experience Committee terms of Reference, Remit and Constitution for 2019/20** **AB(18/19)048**

12.4. The proposal was well received although it was suggested that the committee might benefit from a shorter title. This was agreed and would be considered further.

12.5. The Committee remit and membership for 2019/20 were approved.

13. UPDATE ON STUDENT ACCESS AND INCLUSION **AB(18/19)049**

13.1. Members were updated on progress in widening participation in a challenging environment, where demographics were changing and school leavers numbers were reducing. It was noted that the University was expanding its relationships with schools to encompass the Borders and Fife.

13.2. The success of the student-led 'Students as Partners' and peer support projects was noted.

13.3. Work to develop the infrastructure to support gender workstreams and action plans was outlined and noted, as was the development of data sets within COGNOS to support gender projects and Athena Swan in particular.

13.4. Progress towards implementation of the Widening Participation Strategy was noted.

13.5. The Gender Action Plan was approved.

14. ANNUAL REPORT ON QUALITY ENHANCEMENT TO SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL **AB(18/19)050**

14.1. The format and outline content of the draft report was approved in principle and was recommended for consideration by the University Court.

15. HONORARY AWARDS **AB(18/19)051**

15.1. Members commented that the limited diversity of graduands being considered was an issue. It was noted that very few Fellowship nominations were received and it should be stressed that fellowships were open to staff at all levels of the organisation.

- 15.2. It was further suggested that future reports should include the number of nominations considered by the Honorary Awards Committee and the diversity characteristics thereof.
- 15.3. Members suggested that a preliminary round be introduced where a shorter nomination could be produced. It was considered that the length of the current nomination form and the time taken to complete same was discouraging nominations. It was suggested that the summary detailing each of the candidate's achievements in the paper was considered too short to come to an informed conclusion.
- 15.4. The nomination for honorary degree detailed in the paper was recommended to Court for endorsement.
- 15.5. Approval of the nomination for honorary fellowship was postponed, pending further discussion and clarification on the fellowship award process (and internal communication of same) at the Honorary Awards Committee.

PART B RECEIPT OF MINUTES

16. MINUTE FROM THE JOINT MEETING OF LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 MAY 2019 AB(18/19)052

- 16.1. The minute from the joint meeting of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee and the Student Experience Committee, held on 16 May 2019, was noted.

17. MINUTE FROM THE RESEARCH & INNOVATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 MAY 2019 AB(18/19)053

- 17.1. The minute from the Research & Innovation Committee, held on 9 May 2019, was noted.

PART C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

18. COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT TO ACADEMIC BOARD 2018/19 AB(18/19)054

- 18.1. The Collaborative Activity Report to Academic Board 2018/19 was noted.

19. UNIVERSITY TOP RISKS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2018/19: MONITORING REPORT 3 OF 3 AB(18/19)055

- 19.1. The University Top Risks for 2018/19 Monitoring Report was noted.

20. OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL 2019/20 TO 2021/22 AB(18/19)056

20.1. The update on the Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council 2019/20 to 2021/22 was noted.

21. GUIDANCE ON STUDENT PREGNANCY, MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND ADOPTION AB(18/19)057

21.1. It was noted that the guidance had been instigated and developed largely by the Edinburgh Napier Students' Association.

21.2. The guidance on Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption was noted.

22. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021 – CODE OF PRACTICE AB(18/19)058

22.1. Thanks were expressed to all staff who had contributed to the creation of the document.

22.2. The Research Excellence Framework 2021 Code Of Practice was noted.

23. VALEDICTION

23.1. Members noted that the meeting would be Dr Cairncross' last Academic Board. She was thanked for her thirty years of service to the University and for her invaluable guidance and support to members.

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

All at 0900 in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus:

18 October 2019
29 November 2019
06 March 2020
05 June 2020