

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY**

**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 23 March 2015  
at 3.45 pm in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

**Present:** Dr G Forbes (Chair); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Mr N Ballantyne; Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor); Mr M Connarty; Mr R Hare; Dr S Jiwa; Mr R Kemmer; Mr S Logie; Mr B Rigby; Professor A Scullion; Professor A Sambell (Vice Principal, Deputy Vice Chancellor); Mr D Smith; Dr P Stollard; Mr R Strachan; Mr R Sweetman; Mrs P Woodburn; Mr N Woodcock.

**Apologies:** Ms M Ali; Ms J Boyle; Dr V Ellis; Mr W Gallagher; Mr I McIntosh (Dean, FHLSS); Mr R Maclennan.

**In attendance:** Mr S Belfer (Finance Director); Dr S Cairncross (Dean, FECCI); Mr D Cloy (Clerk to Court); Mr K Ross (interim Director of Human Resources and Development); Professor G Stonehouse (Dean, Business School); Dr G Webber (University Secretary).

**1. OPENING REMARKS, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

- 1.1. The Chair mentioned the Pre-Court Strategy Presentation on Research & Innovation which had taken place prior to the meeting, in which members had discussed and welcomed the range of activity underway to take forward this important element of Strategy 2020.
- 1.2. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed Keith Ross (interim Director of Human Resources and Development) to his first Court meeting.
- 1.3. The apologies were **noted**.

**Part A For discussion and decision**

**2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2014 UC(14/15)37**

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2014 were **approved**.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

**(i) Policies and Processes for Conduct of Remuneration Committee Business (minute 4.8)**

- 3.1. The Chair reported that the requirement within the SFC Financial Memorandum to have regard to public sector pay policy had been incorporated into the final Policy and Procedure for the Conduct of Remuneration Committee Business.

#### **4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

**UC(14/15)38**

- 4.1. The Principal introduced her written report and invited the University Secretary to update Court on the current position with regards to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill. Court noted that the Statutory Guidance for Scotland had now been issued and that the University would participate in a working group established by the Secretaries of Scottish Universities to develop sector wide approaches to addressing the requirements in the guidance.
- 4.2. The Principal also highlighted the recent successful graduation ceremonies in Hong Kong and the Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) follow up visit due to take place later in the week.
- 4.3. The discussions which had been held with RBS on the possibility of working together on enterprise were noted, and it was confirmed that the University was keen to continue its association with Entrepreneurial Spark following its move to develop a new centre for entrepreneurs at the Edinburgh headquarters of RBS. With regard to the Scottish Government's consultation on higher education governance it was noted that the Scottish Government's response to the consultation was awaited.
- 4.4. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

#### **5. REVIEW OF CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION\***

**UC(14/15)39**

- 5.1. The Finance Director introduced the paper which provided Court with the Quarter 2 forecast for 2014/15 and financial results for January 2015 year to date.
- 5.2. Court **noted** the report.

#### **6. ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE**

**UC(14/15)40**

- 6.1. The University Secretary introduced the paper which presented an update on progress being made in the development of the 2015-25 Estates Strategy. It was noted that Court had expected to approve the strategy in June, however it was proposed that the timetable should be relaxed in light of a number of discussions that were currently in progress which might influence the way the strategy develops. It was therefore suggested that approval need not be sought before October 2015. The current discussions with the City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Rugby Union about the possibility of developing the sports facilities next to the Sighthill Campus at Sighthill Park were also highlighted. It was noted that Finance & Property Committee had agreed in principle a budget of £1.3m for the extension of the gym facilities at the Sighthill Campus which formed part of these discussions.
- 6.2. It was noted that Court did not wish to see the timetable for approving the Estates Strategy move any further than proposed and that it expected to receive the Estates Strategy for approval at its October 2015 meeting.

- 6.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the progress being made in the development of the 2015-25 Estates Strategy and **agreed** that the final draft need not be presented to Court for approval before October 2015.

## **7. REPORT FROM THE TNE SUB-GROUP**

- 7.1. Court received an update on progress with the work of the Transnational Education Sub-Group and noted that the Group's deadline for reporting had been extended to allow for full consideration of its report, which it hoped to bring to Court in June. It was suggested that, should the Group prove unable to conclude its business by the June Court meeting, consideration should be given to appropriate future arrangement for managing this area of work.
- 7.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the update.

## **8. VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE SCHEME PROPOSAL UC(14/15)41**

- 8.1. The interim Director of Human Resources introduced the paper which sought Court's approval for the implementation of a Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) as detailed in the paper. The importance of clear and consistent messages about the purpose of the scheme through effective communication was emphasised and it was noted that a communication plan was being developed which would include briefings for managers and staff and a set of FAQs.
- 8.2. Discussion followed during which it was noted that there was a degree of flexibility in the budget allocated for the scheme. The communication plan outlined was welcomed and it was suggested that greater clarity on the criteria to be used would be helpful. It was also noted that the University's strategic direction was sufficiently clear at the current time to enable staff to make informed decisions regarding the Scheme.
- 8.3. Thereafter Court **approved** the Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) as detailed in the paper.

## **9. POLICY ON SEVERANCE PAYMENTS UC(14/15)42**

- 9.1. The Convenor of the Remuneration Committee presented the Policy on Severance Payments produced in accordance with the requirements of the SFC Financial Memorandum, and recommended by the Remuneration Committee. A consequential amendment to the terms of reference of the Remuneration Committee to reflect this policy was also proposed.
- 9.2. Court **approved** the Policy on Severance Payments and the consequential amendment to the terms of reference of the Remuneration Committee as detailed in the paper.

**10. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS UC(14/15)43**

10.1. Court **approved** the appointment of KPMG LLP as the External Audit service provider to the University for an initial period of three years, commencing with the financial year 2014/15, with the proviso of extensions, by mutual consent, for a further two single years.

**Part B For information**

**11. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 6 MARCH 2015 UC(14/15)44**

11.1. Court **noted** the minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board of 6 March 2015.

**12. REF OUTCOMES UC(14/15)45**

12.1. Court **noted** the report on REF outcomes and activity underway to develop research at the University.

**13. NSA ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS UC(14/15)46**

13.1. Court **noted** the paper which presented the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements of Napier Students' Association (NSA) for the year ended 30 June 2014.

13.2. Members raised a number of points and queries in relation to the Report and Financial Statements and it was noted that there would be further discussion between the University and the NSA to consider and address these.

**14. COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT\* UC(14/15)47**

14.1. Court **noted** the 2013/14 annual report on the monitoring of complaints.

14.2. In discussion, the challenges in recognising and recording complaints were recognised and it was noted that continuing efforts were required to maintain staff awareness. It was suggested that it would be helpful if future reports provided an overview of the nature of complaints received relating to staff conduct and a clearer presentation of the lessons learned.

**15. FINAL INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY UC(14/15)48**

15.1. Court **noted** the final Internationalisation Strategy which would be subject to further editing prior to publication, including inclusion of baseline data against performance indicators.

**16. FINAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2015/16 UC(14/15)49**

16.1. Court **noted** the final outcome agreement 2015/16 which had been welcomed by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

**17. KEY RISKS MONITORING SCHEDULE\* UC(14/15)50**

17.1. Court **noted** the paper which provided the second assessment of confidence in the management of the University's top risks for academic year 2014/15.

**18. REPORT OF THE COURT/ULT STRATEGY CONFERENCE 23 FEBRUARY 2015 UC(14/15)51**

18.1. Court **noted** the report of the Court/University Leadership Team Strategy Conference which took place on 23 February 2015. The participation of students in the afternoon session of the conference was particularly welcomed.

**Part C Not intended for discussion**

**19. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES**

**19.a Finance & Property Committee meeting on 29 January 2015\* UC(14/15)52**

19.1. The report was **noted**.

**19.b Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 4 March 2015\* UC(14/15)53**

19.2 The report was **noted**.

**19.c Finance & Property Committee meeting on 12 March 2015\* UC(14/15)54**

19.3 The report was **noted**.

**20. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS / ADDITIONAL UPDATES**

20.1. The dates of future Court meetings were **noted**.

20.2. The Chair updated members on progress with the Chancellor appointment process. Court **noted** the update.

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