

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY**

**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 30 October 2017  
at 3.45 pm in the Horizon Suite, Sighthill Campus**

**Present:** Dr G Forbes (Chair); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Mr R Adams; Mr N Ballantyne; Ms J Boyle; Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor); Ms J Brown; Mr C Guest; Dr S Jiwa; Mr M Khatri; Ms H Markley; Ms E Partyka; Professor A Sambell (Vice Principal, Deputy Vice Chancellor) Professor A Scullion; Dr P Stollard; Mr S Walls; Mr N Woodcock; Professor L Yellowlees.

**Apologies:** Dr V Ellis; Professor A McCleery; Mr R Hare; Mrs P Woodburn.

**In attendance:** Dr S Cairncross (Assistant Principal); Mr D Cloy (Clerk to Court); Ms K Dewar (Director of Human Resources & Development); Dr I McIntosh (Assistant Principal); Mr A McGoff (Finance Director); Dr G Webber (University Secretary).

**Observing:** Mark Mackay (Administrative Assistant).

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

- 1.1. The meeting was preceded by a Pre-Court Strategy Presentation on the Student Experience, which members had welcomed.
- 1.2. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed new members Lesley Yellowlees, Manish Khatri and Hannah Markley. Staff observer Mark Mackay was also welcomed, as was Dr Iain McIntosh (Interim Dean of School of Engineering & the Built Environment) who was in attendance to present later in the meeting.
- 1.3. The apologies were **noted**.

**Part A For discussion and decision**

**2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2017 UC(16/17)68**

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2017 were **approved**.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

**(i) ENSA GOVERNANCE/INCORPORATION (item 18)**

- 3.1. It was noted that a report would be received at the December Court meeting.

**4. COURT AND COURT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UC(17/18)01**

- 4.1. Court received the paper which reported on the outcome of the lay member recruitment exercise and presented the sub-committee membership allocations approved at its meeting on 19 June 2017.
- 4.2. Court **noted** the report.

**5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT UC(17/18)02**

- 5.1. The Principal introduced her written report and highlighted the Scottish Spending Review and continuing pressure on budgets.
- 5.2. The ministerial letter of guidance to the SFC on Outcome Agreements and the emphasis on intensification of the process contained therein was highlighted.
- 5.3. The work of Universities Scotland with regard to Widening Access was noted and the recent successful graduation ceremonies were highlighted.
- 5.4. The progress on academic promotions and award of title outlined in the report was noted and welcomed.
- 5.5. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

**6. FINANCIAL REPORT: PROVISIONAL OUTTURN UC(17/18)03  
FOR 2016/17\***

- 6.1. Court received the paper which reported on the status of the Statutory Accounts for the University and its subsidiary Napier University Ventures Limited (NUVL) for the year ended 31 July 2017.
- 6.2. Discussion followed during which activity underway to grow non-exchequer income was noted.
- 6.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

**7. HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE ACT UPDATE UC(17/18)04**

- 7.1. Court received the paper which provided an update on matters relating to the implementation of the HE Governance (Scotland) Act and the revised Scottish Code of Good HE Governance following the meeting of Court's HE Governance Act Implementation Review Group on 20 September 2017.
- 7.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report and **formally adopted** the 2017 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.

**8. STUDENT SURVEYS: OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS UC(17/18)05**

- 8.1. The Vice Principal (Deputy Vice Chancellor) gave a presentation encompassing the content of the two papers presented under agenda items 8. and 9. which covered feedback from student satisfaction surveys, performance in league tables and actions being taken in response. The enabling actions and

investments aimed at delivering Strategy 2020 were highlighted, trends in league table performance over the past 10 years explored and the weighting of elements informing the Times league table examined. An outline of NSS performance and trends over time was given with key areas for improvement highlighted and detail given of the range of immediate actions which were underway. The impact of the University's graduate employability indicators on league table performance was examined and actions underway to improve graduate professional employment figures were outlined.

8.2. Discussion followed during which the need to support academic staff in their interactions with students was recognised and the range of support and development activity underway to enable this was noted. The importance of recognising staff disappointment in recent results and ensuring that they continued to feel valued was emphasised. With regard to nursing programmes it was noted that a new curriculum has been introduced and that while good progress had been made to put in place the required changes which would improve performance these would take time to work through. The positive impact of a further improvement in the academic staff/student ratio was noted and the benefit of continuing to invest in academic staff was recognised. It was noted that, despite the recent disappointment, staff remained confident with the direction of travel.

8.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the presentation and written report.

## **9. REPORT ON LEAGUE TABLE PERFORMANCE UC(17/18)06**

9.1. Court received the paper which provided a summary of league table rankings for the University across the three main league tables in the UK as well as the World University rankings.

9.2. Court **noted** the report.

## **10. REDUNDANCY POLICY UC(17/18)07**

10.1. Court received the paper which outlined proposed changes to the University's Redundancy Policy for which Court approval was sought. The rationale behind the proposed changes was noted as was the consultation process that had been undertaken with the trade unions.

10.2. Discussion followed during which a number of points were clarified and members expressed their support for the changes.

10.3. Thereafter, Court **approved** the revised Redundancy Policy.

## **11. HONORARY AWARDS\* UC(17/18)08 (tabled paper)**

11.1. Court **approved** the proposals for Honorary Awards, as recommended by the Honorary Awards Committee and approved by Academic Board.

**12. PROPOSAL FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE\* UC(17/18)09**  
*[Clerk's note: this item was taken at the end of the meeting. (tabled paper)*  
*All Officers in attendance left the room during discussion of this item*  
*by Court members]*

12.1. Court **approved**, on the recommendation of the Remuneration Committee:

- (i) the creation of two new Vice or Assistant Principals
- (ii) the establishment by Nominations Committee of an appointment committee
- (iii) the delegation to that committee of the power to appoint these Vice or Assistant Principals
- iv) the change of title of the Assistant Principal (International) to reflect the title of the new roles as required
- v) the change of title to Senior Vice Principal (Deputy Vice Chancellor) for the Vice Principal (Deputy Vice Chancellor) as required.

**Part B For information**

**13. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 20 OCTOBER 2017 UC(17/18)10**

13.1. Court **noted** the minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board of 20 October 2017.

**14. UPDATE ON STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS**

14.1. The Vice Principal (Deputy Vice Chancellor) updated Court on a number of current, and potential future, strategic developments: Developments with Allied Health Professional Programmes; recent success in securing funded places for Graduate Level Apprenticeships; the possibility of offering teacher education and the possibility of establishing a new film school.

14.2. Court **noted** the update.

**15. SCHOOL UPDATE: SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

15.1. Court received the presentation from the interim Dean of the School of Engineering and the Built Environment on the strategic development of the School in the context of Strategy 2020. The current position, opportunities and challenges, future direction and plans were outlined.

15.2. Court welcomed the presentation and discussion followed during which the importance of the development of the School's research profile and infrastructure was noted.

15.3. Thereafter Court **noted** the presentation.

## **Part C Not intended for discussion**

### **16. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES**

**16.a Finance & Property Committee Meeting on 27 September 2017\*** **UC(17/18)11**

16.1. The report, including the assurance report on the fire safety of the University Estate contained, was **noted**.

**16.b Nominations Committee meeting on 9 October 2017\*** **UC(17/18)12**

16.2 The report was **noted**.

**16.c Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 12 October 2017\*** **UC(17/18)13**

16.3 The report was **noted**.

**17. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COURT BUSINESS 2017/18** **UC(17/18)14**

17.1. Court **noted** the indicative forward schedule of business.

17.2. Members were invited to consider and suggest topics for future pre-Court strategy presentations.

### **18. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

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

### **OTHER MATTERS**

An update on recent activity within ENSA was noted.

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