

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28 October 2019
at 3.45 pm in the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus**

Present: Dr G Forbes (Chair); Professor A Nolan (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Mr R Adams; Mr S Brannan; Lord Brodie (Chancellor's Assessor)(from item 4); Mr J Chittleburgh; Mr G Cullen; Mr C Ibanez (from item 7); Dr S Jiwa; Dr S Moir; Dr H Patrick (until item 9); Ms E Partyka; Professor A Sambell; Ms G Scholefield; Professor A Scullion; Mr S Walls.

Apologies: Ms J Boyle; Mr J Fraser; Mr C Guest; Ms G Moran; Professor A McCleery; Mr N Woodcock; Professor L Yellowlees.

In attendance: Mr D Cloy (Secretary to Court); Ms K Dewar (Director of People & Services); Mr M Greenhalgh (Interim Vice Principal (International); Mr A McGoff (Director of Finance & Operations); Professor A Tobin (Vice Principal, Learning & Teaching).

1. OPENING REMARKS, WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1. The meeting was preceded by a Pre-Court Presentation showcasing developments and initiatives in support of Learning & Teaching which members had welcomed.
- 1.2. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed new lay member Jeremy Chittleburgh. Michael Greenhalgh (Interim Vice Principal, (International) was also welcomed to the meeting.
- 1.3. The apologies were **noted**.

Part A For discussion and decision

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2019

(i) Open Minutes **UC(18/19)70**

- 2.1. The open minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2019 were **approved**.

(ii) Reserved Minutes* **UC(18/19)71**

- 2.2. The reserved minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2019 were **approved**.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(i) *Minute 20 (reserved)* ENSA Partnership Update
[Recorded on confidential Reserved Business minute]

4. COURT AND COURT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UC(19/20)01

- 4.1. Court noted its membership for 2019/20 and the outcome of the lay Court member recruitment exercise, noted the update on the Chair of Court appointment process and **approved** the recommendation regarding membership of the Audit & Risk Committee recommended by Nominations Committee.

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT UC(19/20)02

- 5.1. The Principal introduced her written report and highlighted a number of points therein. It was noted that the Dean of the School of Health and Social Care had left the University and that activity was underway to appoint both an interim and substantive replacement.
- 5.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

**6. FINANCIAL REPORT: PROVISIONAL OUTTURN UC(19/20)03
FOR 2018/19***

- 6.1. Court received the paper which reported on the provisional financial outturn for the year ended 31 July 2019. The effect of pension valuation adjustments was highlighted and it was noted that actuarial assumptions were currently being reviewed which may improve the position presented in the draft statements.
- 6.2. In discussion it was clarified that unspent capital budget was retained within the cash balance and it was noted that proposals for future estates upgrades would follow on from the new University Strategy.
- 6.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

7. STUDENT SURVEYS: OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS UC(19/20)04

- 7.1. Court received the paper which summarised the latest results of the three independent sector-wide surveys of student experience: the National Student Survey (NSS), the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) along with details of the actions being taken to address the outcomes of these surveys.
- 7.2. Discussion followed during which issues of consistency between the Joint Academic Coding System of classification of academic subjects and modules used by HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) and the University's internal classification of such was noted. It was noted that the NSS was completed by final year students and reflected their experience throughout their time at the University, therefore improvement actions being taken now would not necessarily influence the survey outcomes immediately but would be reflected in the responses of later cohorts. An outline of the full range of feedback gathering activity undertaken to measure student satisfaction across the University was also noted.

7.3. Given the importance of improving performance in student satisfaction surveys it was agreed that Court would receive an update on progress against detailed action plans in future reports.

7.4. Thereafter, Court **noted** the update.

8. REPORT ON LEAGUE TABLE PERFORMANCE UC(19/20)05

8.1. 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 Times World University rankings.

8.2. In discussion it was noted that international student recruitment markets were sensitive to league table rankings, in particular China and Singapore, and that rankings had impact on domestic recruitment. Strong NSS performance and research profile were noted as areas which contributed to higher league table positioning. Court asked for an update on the key factors determining the University's position with an update on work being undertaken to address and influence these.

8.3. Thereafter, Court **noted** the report.

9. UNIVERSITY STRATEGY UPDATE

9.1. Court received an update on the activity which had taken place over the past 12 months to engage and consult on the development of the future University Strategy, building on the current Strategy 2020. It was noted that the draft University Strategy would be brought to Court at its next meeting for consideration along with an update on the development of the core strategies for Research & Innovation, Learning & Teaching and International. There would be a further opportunity for review at the Court/ULT Strategy Day in February 2020 with final sign off for the University Strategy anticipated at March Court, and finalisation of the core strategies following after that.

9.2. Thereafter, Court **noted** the update.

10. RISK APPETITE STATEMENT UC(19/20)06

10.1. Court received and **approved** the proposed risk appetite statement as recommended by Audit and Risk Committee.

11. BREXIT UPDATE UC(19/20)07

11.1. Court received and **noted** the paper which provided an update on developments relating to the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union.

12. HONORARY AWARDS REGULATIONS UC(19/20)08

12.1. With the addition of a lay Court member, Court **approved** the amendments to the constitution of the Honorary Awards Committee. It was agreed that the mechanism by which student members were selected in accordance with the current constitution would be considered further.

13. NOMINATIONS FOR HONORARY AWARDS* UC(19/20)09

13.1. Court **approved** two proposals for Honorary Awards, as recommended by the Honorary Awards Committee and approved by Academic Board. One proposal was referred back to the Honorary Awards Committee for further consideration.

Part B For information

14. ACADEMIC BOARD MEETING 18 OCTOBER 2019 UC(19/20)10

14.1. Court **noted** the minutes from the meeting of the Academic Board of 18 October 2019.

Part C Not intended for discussion

15. REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES

15.a Nominations Committee meeting on 30 September 2019* UC(19/20)11

15.1. The report was **noted**.

15.b Finance & Property Committee meeting on 7 October 2019* UC(19/20)12

15.2 The report was **noted**.

15.c Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 7 October 2019* UC(19/20)13

15.3 The report was **noted**.

16. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COURT BUSINESS 2018/19 UC(19/20)14

16.1. Court **noted** the forward schedule.

17. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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

Part D: Reserved Business

18. CHAIR OF COURT ANNUAL REVIEW FEEDBACK

[The Chair of Court and officers in attendance, apart from the Secretary, left the meeting during this item]

18.1 The report on feedback gathered from members in respect of the annual appraisal of the Chair of Court's performance (as conducted by the Vice Chair) was considered.

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