

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of Meeting held on 17 September 2002

Present: Mr A Mair (in the Chair), Principal, Mr R Clements, Cllr D Clyne, Mr D Cockburn, Dr A Dawson, Dr N Dower, Mr H Duncan, Professor G Graham, Mr J Grant, Miss A Harper, Professor D Houlihan, Cllr P Johnston, Dr P Kinnear, Professor S Logan, Professor B MacGregor, Miss C Macaslan, Dr M Mackie, Dr N Milne, Dr G Roberts, Professor A Rodger, Professor T Salmon, Professor J Sewel, Mrs A Skene, Professor W Smith, Mr G Stevenson, Professor I Torrance, with Mr S Cannon, Miss I Bews, Mr A Donaldson, Mrs L Manders, Dr P Murray and Mrs H Stephen (Clerk).

Mr Mair welcomed Professor MacGregor (Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences & Law) and Mr R Clements (Rector's Assessor) to their first meeting of Court after taking up their appointments.

MINUTES

The Minutes of meeting held on 25 June 2002 were approved.

STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL

- 1 The Principal informed the Court that he, the Chancellor's Assessor and the University Secretary would visit the United States the following week to attend an event to mark the successful conclusion of the first phase of the Sixth Century Campaign. The first stage of the Campaign had exceeded its target and raised £47M, mostly in endowments, other deferred legacies and other funds for specific purposes. The Principal would also attend a number of Alumni events and development meetings in other major US cities. The launch of the second phase of the Sixth Century Campaign would be held in Aberdeen in December, setting an £80M target to be achieved by 2007/08, leaving the remaining £30M of the £150M overall target to be raised by the end of the decade.
- 2 The Principal referred to concerns expressed at an earlier meeting of Court about staff recruitment and retention difficulties due to the low rates of pay of academic staff and drew attention to the academic salary scales circulated for information with the Court papers.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

Audit Committee

- 3 Mr Grant presented a report of the Audit Committee meeting held on 24 June 2002:
- 4 The Committee had approved three internal audit reports: Research Grant Income, Fraud Detection and Prevention and a Follow-Up Report on 2000/01. Mr Grant added that approval of audit reports did not necessarily mean that the audit findings were satisfactory; the report on fraud had identified the need for formal procedures and these would now be developed. He was pleased to be able to report however that in the 2000/01 cycle, 52 audit recommendations had been accepted by management, 50 of those had been implemented and the remainder had not been pursued for sound reasons.
- 5 The Committee had approved Deloitte & Touche's Internal Audit Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan for the remainder of the period of their current appointment as the University's Internal Auditors, 2002/04.
- 6 The Committee had also approved Deloitte & Touche's Internal Audit Plan for the year 2002/03 which would be brought forward to the December Court, together with the internal auditors' annual report for 2001/02 and the Audit Committee's Annual Report to Court.
- 7 The Committee for its part had approved financial policies on Land and Building Depreciation Review and Expenses and Benefits Policy (which had then been formally approved by the Court on 25 June 2002).

SELECTION COMMITTEES FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

- 8 The Court considered recommendations for changes in the composition of shortlisting and selection committees for academic staff (except in the Faculty of Medicine & Medical Sciences), as follows:
- (i) that the shortlisting panels for all academic positions (excluding professorial appointments comprise: Dean (Convener), Head of School and Senior Discipline Representative.
 - (ii) that selection committee memberships for all academic positions (excluding professorial appointments) comprise: Dean (Convener), Vice-Principal, Head of School, Senior Discipline Representative and one further member of academic staff selected by the Dean;
 - (iii) that a lay member of the University Court be required as a member of selection committees for professorial and senior administrative (Grade 6) positions only.

Lay members of the University Court may however be invited to join other selection committees at the discretion of the Convener.

The current arrangements within the Faculty of Medicine & Medical Sciences, in which wider representation to reflect clinical responsibility was required, would be unaffected by the changes.

- 9 In discussion it was noted that the proposals sought to meet the wishes of lay members of Court by removing the requirement to include a lay member in selection committees for appointments below professorial level. The inclusion of one of the four Vice-Principals reflected the desirability of a wider institutional view being represented on appointment committees. The discretion of the Convener to appoint additional academic and lay members should ensure compliance with current University policy on gender balance in the composition of selection committees.
- 10 It was agreed that a suggestion from the Students' Association President to include a student on selection committees at the discretion of the Convener be taken away for consideration.
- 11 The Court approved the recommendations, for immediate implementation, subject to amendment to reflect the retention for the time being of Departments rather than Schools in the Faculty of Education.

UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE ADMISSIONS REPORTS

- 12 Professor Houlihan presented interim reports on undergraduate and postgraduate admissions as at 9 September and 1 September 2002 respectively. He was pleased to report that home undergraduate targets, which had been raised to 2499 partly in response to the student retention difficulties, had been met and exceeded in all degree programmes except the BEd programmes. Although overseas undergraduate acceptances were above target they were slightly down on the previous year and it was hoped that sufficient would register to meet the 158 target.
- 13 Professor Houlihan was also pleased to report that this was the first year in which the University had processed the Faculty of Education's applications. The procedures had worked well, with the overall numbers and the proportion in priority areas, both now close to the targets. Overall the undergraduate recruitment process had gone well.

- 14 The level of postgraduate applications was very high, and Postgraduate Registry was putting a considerable effort into processing these as quickly as possible. The postgraduate numbers overall and the total number of taught and research applicants cleared for admission (category F) had increased. While there had been a notable increase in overseas numbers compared to the previous year, the category F figures for home taught students showed a decrease in all areas, and the slight increase in category F research figures was mainly in Science & Engineering.

APPOINTMENTS TO COURT AND COURT COMMITTEES

- 15 The Court approved the appointments, which had been made under delegated powers, of Mr Moir Lockhead as a co-opted member of the University Court, and Mr Grenville Johnstone as a member of the Audit Committee, both with immediate effect for the period to 31 July 2005.

SCHOOLS IN THE FACULTIES OF ARTS & DIVINITY, SCIENCE & ENGINEERING AND SOCIAL SCIENCES & LAW

- 16 The Court approved the names of the new Schools within the three Faculties of Arts & Divinity, Science & Engineering and Social Sciences & Law, and noted the appointments of the Heads of Schools, as follows.

<u>Schools</u>	<u>Heads</u>
<u>Faculty of Arts & Divinity</u>	
School of Divinity and Religious Studies and Philosophy <i>(Divinity and Religious Studies, Philosophy)</i>	Dr S Kunin
School of English and Film Studies <i>(English, Film Studies)</i>	Dr B Fennell
School of History and History of Art <i>(History, History of Art)</i>	Professor J Ohlmeyer
School of Modern Languages <i>(Celtic, French, German, Hispanic Studies)</i>	Professor J Dunkley
<u>Faculty of Science & Engineering</u>	
School of Biological Sciences <i>(Agriculture & Forestry, Plant & Soil Science, Zoology)</i>	Professor C Secombes
School of Engineering & Physical Sciences <i>(Chemistry, Engineering, Physics)</i>	Professor H Chandler
School of Psychology, Computing & Mathematical Sciences <i>(Computing Science, Mathematical Sciences, Psychology)</i>	Professor J Hunter
School of Resources, Environment & Society	Professor C P Mitchell

*(Geography and Environment, Geology & Petroleum Geology
Land Economy (incl Rural Economics, formerly part of
Agriculture & Forestry, Arkleton Centre)*

Faculty of Social Sciences & Law

University of Aberdeen Business School Professor C Roberts

*(Accountancy & Finance, Economics, Management Studies,
Property (formerly part of Land Economy)*

School of Law Professor P Beaumont

School of Social Science

(Anthropology, Politics & International Relations, Sociology) Professor S Bruce

STRATEGIC PLAN 2002-2006

- 17 The Court received a copy of the printed version of the Strategic Plan 2002-2006 which had been submitted to SHEFC in July.

INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION WITH THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

- 18 The Court was informed that the Governing body of The RGU at its meeting on 18 June 2002 had considered and approved the Joint Report on Institutional Collaboration, and the recommendation that “the two universities explore in detail the option of a merger to establish a new model institution, engage in a thorough risk management study of the option, and consult widely with staff, students, and other stakeholders”.
- 19 The first stage of the next phase of the analysis would be to consider the academic costs and benefits of a merger, and this would be undertaken through inter-institutional working groups across all academic areas.
- 20 In discussion the Court also noted that while no formal meetings of the inter-institutional group between the University and The RGU had taken place over the summer, there had been a number of informal exchanges between individuals and considerable thought had been given by the two institutions to the shape of the next stage of the project. A paper would be submitted to the Senate at its meeting on 9 October seeking to establish the framework for consultation over the option of new model merger and in particular seeking advice on the questions to be addressed in order to take forward the debate. It was intended that the inter-institutional working groups address the range of issues by Christmas and prepare reports which would form the basis of a wider consultation document to be issued to the academic community in the New Year.
- 21 As previously agreed, summary reports on the progress of the Project would be provided at each meeting of the Court.

VACATION POWERS AND DELEGATED POWERS ON SPECIFIC MATTERS

- 22 The Court homologated the following decisions taken over the summer period under Vacation Powers and Delegated Powers on specific matters:

Vacation Powers

Fees: The fee for the full-time MBA for EC/home and overseas students for 2002-03 had been set at £8K (rectifying a figure in paper CT01-02:43 appendix 3 which had been approved by the Court in May 2002).

Delegated Powers

Pathfinder Project: The initial OJEC advertisement had been issued on 16 August with a response date of 24 September 2002.

Health Centre: The invitation to tender for the project had been issued with a response date at the end of September. In order to meet construction timescales, and provided that the costs were within the business case criteria, the award of the construction contract would be confirmed, under the delegated powers, by 7 October 2002.

UNIVERSITY SALARY SCALES

- 23 The Court received for information the proposed national pay scales for 2002/03 for academic and other categories of staff. The scales represented the employers' final offer in the 2002/03 national pay negotiations and remained subject to ratification by the trades unions at national level.

GIFTS, BENEFACTIONS AND CHARITABLE RESEARCH AWARDS

- 24 The Court received for information a report from the Director of External Relations on gifts, benefactions and charitable awards received by the University in the period 1 February 2002 to 31 July 2002.

COURT MEMBERSHIP 2002-03: TERMS OF OFFICE

- 25 The Court received for information a list of members of Court for the 2002-2003 session, together with the dates of their terms of office.

STUDENT ASSOCIATION

- 26 The representatives of the Students' Association tabled, for the information of members of Court, copies of three books, about the City, the University and the Students' Association which it had sent to freshers.

RETIRING MEMBERS

- 27 Mr Mair thanked Mr Grant and Mrs Skene who were attending their last meeting for their outstanding contributions to the work of the Court over a twelve-year period. The Court, at its Dinner the previous evening, had also expressed its appreciation for the input from the other members whose terms of office had concluded – Dr H Fullerton, Mr R McGregor, Miss M Main, Professor D Ogston and Professor P Sloane.