

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

**Minutes of Extraordinary meeting held on Friday 26 August 2011**

Present: Sir Moir Lockhead (in the Chair), Principal, Mr A Amoore, Ms T Birley, Professor P Edwards, Professor C Fynsk, Mr J Hall (by teleconference), Professor D Houlihan, Mr G Hunter, Mr B Lockhart, Professor S Logan, Professor P McGeorge, Ms K McPhail (by teleconference), Dr M Mackie, Mr B Pack, Mr B Paterson, Professor G Robinson, Mr R Ruddiman, Mr D Steyn (by teleconference), Dr N Vargesson and Professor N Webster.

In attendance: Professor N Haites, Professor B MacGregor, Professor P Morgan, Mr K Murray (by teleconference), Mr S Cannon, Ms C Banks, Mr A Donaldson, Mr L Forsyth, Mrs C Inglis, Dr G Mackintosh, Ms J Sewel, Ms R Sandison and Mr B Purdon (Clerk).

Apologies were received from Dr A Baxter, Ms J Craw, Provost W Howatson and Professor A Rodger.

MINUTES

383 The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2011 were approved subject to one typographical error being corrected.

NEW MEMBERS

384 The Senior Governor welcomed Ms T Birley, Mr B Paterson and Mr D Steyn to their first meeting as members of Court.

REST OF UK FEES

385 The Court received and considered the following (*copies filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning's Statement to Parliament on Higher Education of 30 June 2011; the Scottish Government's Consultation Document on the Student Fees Order; a University Position Paper with Risk Analysis; the University's Marketing Campaign Plan and draft press statement; and a paper outlining potential legal issues in the implementation of the Scottish Government's proposals.

386 The Court discussed in significant detail the University's proposed position in response to the Scottish Government's proposal to allow institutions to charge from 2012/13 undergraduate students domiciled in the rest of the UK up to £9,000 per annum in tuition fees. The Court noted that the University's proposed response had been discussed by Senate and had been revised to reflect the Senate's position that a fee waiver should not be contingent on academic performance other than progression to the fourth year of a four year undergraduate degree.

387 In discussion, it was agreed that the University should explore what further bursary and scholarship support it could provide in addition to that proposed in the paper and that which was already in place subject to future affordability. The Court also discussed the proposed approach to marketing the University and its fees package to rest of UK students.

388 After discussion the Court agreed that, subject to the Scottish Government passing the necessary legislative Order to permit the charging of fees to rest of UK students, that:

- The University would charge a single annual fee for RUK entrants for all subjects and no differentiation across subject groups according to the cost of provision.
- The annual fee would be £9,000.
- The fees for a four year degree would not exceed £27,000.
- Further consideration would be given to fee waiver and bursary arrangements subject to affordability.

## GOVERNANCE REVIEW

- 389 The Court received and considered the remit and consultation questions of the Scottish Government's Review of Higher Education Governance and the University's draft response (*copies filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).
- 390 The Court noted that the response had been developed following consultation with the wider University Community, the Senate and the Governance and Nominations Committee.
- 391 In discussion, the Court agreed that it was appropriate that the response should note that notwithstanding the Court's position regarding the automatic right of the Rector as Chair being inconsistent with best Corporate Governance practice, the Rector was able to make an extensive and valuable contribution as a member of Court in other ways. It was further agreed that it would not be appropriate to comment directly on the consultation question, suggesting that all institutions should have a Rector, because governance arrangements should reflect the particular circumstances of individual institutions. The Court further agreed that the response should note that the suggestion of elected Principals would be at odds with practice in many other key international competitors.

## DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 392 The Court noted that the next scheduled meeting of Court would be Tuesday 27 September 2011.