UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
BUSINESS COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2016

Present: Eric Crockart (Convener), Alex Arthur, Nuala Booth, Stephen Duggan, Colin Duncan, Caroline Inglis (University Secretary), Nigel Lindsay, Duncan Macniven, Lynne Mennie, Alan Milne, Marjory Reid, Mel Roberts, Karen Scaife (clerk), Jenny Shirreffs, Susan Stuart, Joe Wallace, Brian Wood, Mike Cooper, Genna Clarke, Graham Hunter, Katrina Allan, Theresa Merrick (presentation only)

Apologies: Corinne Blackstock, Mary Stephen

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Joe Wallace - DRAFT RESOLUTION: THE JOHN NISBET CHAIR OF EDUCATION

1. MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting held on 9 March were approved, subject to Graham Hunter's apologies being noted.

2. MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising were noted.

3. STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

Theresa Merrick delivered a presentation on the University's approach to Stakeholder management. She outlined who the key stakeholder groups were, and the main reasons why and how the University engage with them. The University are working towards developing a consistent and co-ordinated approach to stakeholder management which will analyse, track and map relationships to maximise benefit to the University.

The Business Committee thanked her for the presentation and asked how they could support the University. Theresa is to come back to the committee with ideas.

4. REPORT FROM THE CONVENER

The convener thanked the committee (in particular Nigel Lindsay) for the lobbying work that was recently undertaken on the issue of university finances. He suggested that if the committee is minded to undertake this sort of work again, then they might want to consider creating a structure for co-ordinating and overseeing any future lobbies, where those involved can discuss and perhaps meet together between BC meetings.

The Convenor attended a meeting of the Ancients' B.C.s on Monday June 6 in St Andrews. The discussion focused on engaging with graduates at graduations, meeting with politicians and lobbying.

The convener invited the student president to give a report. Genna Clarke advised the committee that £121,520 was raised through this year's charities campaign (£102,000 from the student show). Unfortunately the Torcher Parade had to be cancelled this year due to issues with road closures.

AUSA saw a change in constitution this year and the Sabbatical officer staffing structure. In addition they have adopted a new constitution and are currently recruiting for a new CEO.
AUSA is currently situated in Johnston and are utilising Hillhead facilities for students. They are keen to retain a central location on Campus.

Graham Hunter thanked and congratulated Genna for her work as student president.

5. PROPOSED CHANGES TO GENERAL COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

The convenor outlined the proposed changes to allow future conveners and vice-conveners to complete at least one full four-year term as envisaged in the Standing Orders, and not be subject to the cut off applying to ordinary members of the Business Committee. He supplied the committee with two possible forms of wording that could allow this. The committee agreed that standing orders should be reviewed – Duncan Macniven agreed to review the standing orders and propose a revised form of wording to the committee for review.

The committee felt it was necessary to review the Standing Orders as a whole. (Karen Scaife will circulate to the committee). The website should be updated with standing orders and minutes.

6. SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTION LOBBY REPORT

The recent lobbying exercise demonstrates the resource available to the university. The convenor suggested establishing a lobbying subgroup to co-ordinate any future lobbying activity – Mel Roberts, Nigel Lindsay, Lynne Mennie, Duncan Macniven and Alan Milne volunteered. It was suggested to look at an alternative way of communicating this sort of activity i.e. Dropbox or SharePoint.

7. DRAFT COURT MINUTES FROM 22 MARCH MEETING AND REPORTS FROM ASSESSORS

It was noted that the Governance and Nominations committee are currently considering a proposal to reduce the size of Court – from 28 members to 17 members (maximum 20). This might mean a reduction in General Council assessors from 4 to 2. This is being driven by the new legislation in the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill. The proposed change is to try and make court more manageable.

After discussion the convenor agreed to issue a letter to court members expressing the committee's concerns about the proposed changes.

8. REVIEW OF PATTERN OF BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The committee agreed that the new pattern was working. They felt it would be necessary to conduct an introduction for new members prior to the first meeting of the academic year.

9. TOGAS AND BAJANS

The committee discussed the letter from Andrew Gray regarding his concerns about the wearing of red undergraduate togas and the use of the term “bajan” for first year students. It was agreed that the convenor would issue a response to Mr Gray highlighting that the robes are still used for ceremonial occasions, but that current students are not familiar with the mediaeval term Bajans.

10. HISTORY OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The committee agreed to create a subgroup (Nigel Lindsay, Graham Hunter and Steve Duggan) to investigate the potential of updating the existing publication.
11. AOCB

Mike Cooper requested that the committee members be provided with parking passes – these will be issued in advance of the next meeting.

Nigel Lindsay enquired about plans for Kings Pavilion. Caroline Inglis advised that Court were reviewing the current capital plan.

12. DRAFT RESOLUTION: THE JOHN NISBET CHAIR OF EDUCATION

The content of this report was noted.

13. ALUMNI RELATIONS UPDATE

The content of this report was noted.

14. TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP AND CO-OPTING

The committee noted the current membership and were encouraged to consider fellow members of the General Council to co-opt.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 1 September, 4pm at the new Rowett building (there will be an optional tour prior to the meeting).