1 DRAFT MINUTES

The draft Minute of the 301st Statutory meeting was approved.

2 BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Convener confirmed that he would present his full report from the Business Committee at the next Statutory Meeting.

The Convener noted with sadness the loss of Dr Maitland Mackie, Rector and member of the Business Committee of the General Council. He would be greatly missed.

The Convener noted that it was his first General Council meeting as Convener of the Business Committee and he paid tribute to the work of his predecessor Mr Colin Duncan. The Convener reported that the Business Committee had recently appointed Ms Muriel Roberts as its new Vice-Convener.

The Convener highlighted that the Scottish Government had recently published a consultation on Higher Education Governance Legislation which included proposals to restrict the number of alumni representatives on university governing bodies. The Business Committee was aware of the issue and was considering submitting a response. This would also take into account any representations made by the University Court.

3 PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR’S REPORT

The General Council received a presentation from the Principal on developments within the University over the past year.

The Principal reported on the role the University had played in facilitating and informing debate around the Referendum on Scottish Independence. He noted that it had been a significant year for Scotland but also for the University, with a series of events commemorating the 500th anniversary of the death of Bishop Elphinstone. The Principal reflected on how the University continued to pursue the same fundamental mission as first envisaged by Bishop Elphinstone.

The Principal reported on a number of aspects of the student experience, including initiatives to improve student support and retention, employability and widening access. The Principal also highlighted the main features of the University’s ten year capital plan. In particular, the Principal noted the importance of the new Energy building and the extensive progress that the University’s Institute for Energy was making in working with the Energy industries. He also discussed the University’s plans to build new student accommodation to address both increased current demand and future growth in the student population. The plans also include significant expenditure on the refurbishment of central teaching facilities at Old Aberdeen and the provision of affordable accommodation for junior staff.

The Principal also reported that the Court had recently approved a proposal to establish a campus in South Korea which would focus on postgraduate and continuing professional development courses in offshore engineering. This was an exciting major new step forward in the internationalisation of the University’s activities.

The Principal reported on the achievements of a number of staff and students in recent months, which illustrated the success that was being achieved across a range of activities.
The Principal highlighted that the University would receive imminently the results of the Research Excellence Framework which was a major UK wide assessment of the research quality and impact of universities.

The Principal noted a number of recent events that had been held to engage with alumni and supporters around the world and that alumni engagement and philanthropic giving continued to strengthen.

The Principal echoed the Convener’s remarks regarding the loss of Dr Maitland Mackie as Rector but noted that the University looked forward to working with the new Rector, Ms Maggie Chapman.

The Principal reported that Professor Stephen Logan would shortly retire from the University as Senior Vice-Principal and he paid tribute to the exceptional contribution he had made to the success of the University.

The Principal thanked the General Council for its continuing support for the University.

4 VOTE OF THANKS

The Vice-Convener of the Business Committee, Ms Muriel Roberts, gave the Vote of Thanks to the Principal for his presentation.

5 NOTICE FROM THE CLERK AND REGISTRAR

5.1 GENERAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2014

The Clerk and Registrar advised the General Council that the election of 2 General Council Assessors to Court ran in May and June 2014. Five candidates had stood for the two vacancies and Professor Nuala Booth and Mr Colin Duncan were elected with effect from 1 October 2014 for a period of four years.

5.2 BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2015

The Clerk and Registrar advised that as required by Standing Orders notice was hereby given that there was currently a vacancy for an elected member of the Business Committee of the General Council and that the current terms of eight members of the Committee would end in September 2015.

It was noted that nominations for the nine positions on the Committee would close on Tuesday 24 March 2015. If an election was required this would be held at the summer statutory meeting and the General Council would be notified accordingly. It was further noted that nominations forms were now available and would also be made available on the General Council website.

6 NOTICE OF THE 303rd STATUTORY MEETING

The Clerk and Registrar reported that the 303rd Statutory Meeting of the General Council would be held during the weekend of the May Festival 29th-31st May 2015 in Old Aberdeen, the exact date, time and location to be confirmed.