1. MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting held on 9 November 2017 were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

3. PRESENTATION: UNIVERSITY BUDGET & FINANCE, MR DAVID BEATTIE, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Mr David Beattie (Director of Finance) was invited to talk about the University’s finances and financial outlook for upcoming years.

Mr Beattie gave a short overview of the accounts for 2016 and 2017. This was followed by a comparison with other Scottish Universities with income >£100M:

- Both Edinburgh and Glasgow University are ahead of other institutions;
- Aberdeen is almost at a break-even position;
- There are number of difficulties in the sector, including: Brexit, changes in government funding and competition from other universities outside Scotland.

Mr Beattie added that, compared to Dundee and Strathclyde, which are both in a similar financial position, there is almost no growth in Aberdeen. In comparison, both, Dundee and Strathclyde, have been performing better in the recent years.

He went on to explain different income sources, these include:

- Tuition fees and educational contracts;
- Funding council grants;
- Research grants and contracts;
- Other income sources.

Mr Beattie also noted that, due to the cap on student numbers, one of potential income streams is an increased number of international students. At the moment there is very little growth in this area.

He spoke about the University’s financial goals for the next two years. The aim is to break-even in 2019/20. He also added that compared to other universities in Scotland and England, currently Aberdeen has less borrowings. The plans are to borrow around £50M in the future for infrastructure projects to stimulate growth.

Mr Beattie ended his presentation by identifying several key areas for income growth, diversification and cost control:

- Online education;
- International fee growth;
- Transnational education;
- Control over costs.
4. REPORT FROM THE CONVENER

The Convener prepared a written report ahead of the meeting in which he spoke about:

- Participation in discussions with the search consultants who are advising the University on the appointment of the next Principal;
- The Winter Statutory Meeting of the General Council and a talk by Professor David Smith;
- Notice of motion to vary standing orders;
- The Business Committee Strategy Day which took place in February.

The Convener also added his apologies for the postponement, owing to bad weather a shutdown of public transport, of the meeting from its original date of March 1st. The report from the Convener was approved by the Committee.

5. PROPOSED CHANGES TO STANDING ORDERS

The Convener thanked Mr Bruce Purdon (Senior Policy Adviser and Clerk to Court) for coming to the meeting.

Mr Purdon explained that the proposed paper is from September and is not a proposal from Court itself.

The Committee noted that it is important to retain the link between the Committee and Court. It was also added that the Committee members do not want Court members to be members of the Committee with full voting rights.

In addition, it was suggested to have a meeting with a few members of Court to strengthen the links.

It was agreed that non-voting observers and different Court members invited to meetings by the Committee, will replace Professor Booth, Mr Duncan, Mr Percival and Mrs Shirreffs once they retire. Further discussions will need to take place to change the Standing Orders accordingly and identify the process of identifying the guest observers.

No decision regarding the wording of the current composition was made.

6. PROPOSAL TO ALIGN WINTER STATUTORY MEETING WITH UNIVERSITY ‘AGM’

Mr Purdon introduced a proposal to align the Winter Statutory Meeting of the General Council with a new University annual public meeting (AGM) which will be required from academic year 2018/19. The Committee was invited to consider the proposal and agree whether a change to the date of the Winter Statutory and the format should be taken forward.

The Committee members discussed the proposal and agreed to combine the AGM with the Winter Statutory Meeting of the General Council on a trial basis. This means that the next Winter Statutory Meeting will take place in January 2019 instead of December 2018. If the Winter Statutory Meeting is moved permanently, several Standing Orders will need to be amended.

7. BUSINESS COMMITTEE STRATEGY DAY – REPORT BACK

The Convener presented the report and thanked the members for their participation. He also noted that two sub-groups on member engagement; and on the Terms of Reference of the Business Committee had been set up at the Strategy Day and asked the Committee to formally endorse them. The Committee approved the sub-groups.

Further suggestions were made:

- To invite the Principal to the next Business Committee meeting in June and ask him to give his final update;
- To set up a sub-group to gather the Business Committee views on the next University’s Strategic Plan and produce a paper to go to Court. Mr Macniven agree to lead the group. Ms
Mordue and Ms Taylor volunteered to join the group. Members who were not present at the meeting will be informed about an additional sub-group via email from the Convener:
- To present the finding from the Strategy Day at the next Statutory Meeting of the General Council in May.

**ACTION:** Mr Macniven
Mr Lindsay

8. **ALUMNI RELATIONS UPDATE**

Katrina Allan, Head of Alumni Engagement, prepared a written report ahead of the meeting in which she spoke about:

- **Student Engagement:**
  - The Winter Graduation 2017 ceremonies activities, including interacting with new graduates to encourage the provision of ongoing contact details and preferences;
  - The development of alumni volunteering opportunities to support student employability;
  - The support to the Chamber Choir for the London performance of the Celebration of Carols (*The Three Ships*).

- **Communications & Events:**
  - The success of the annual Celebration of Carols, hosted in both Aberdeen in London. The event featured *The Three Ships*, written by Sir Tony Robinson with music by Professor Paul Mealor and starring the University’s Chamber Choir;
  - Other successful alumni events, all as part of the Aberdeen Connect programme;
  - Two editions of the quarterly alumni ezine, Voic:E, have been issued since the last meeting in November;
  - Ongoing work with three academic Schools – Business; Law; and Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition;
  - Increased engagement with alumni through social media channels.

- **Alumni Volunteering & Alumni Networks:**
  - The development of the alumni volunteering strategy through working closely with colleagues in Student Recruitment, the Careers Service, and the Student Retention Working Group;
  - The valuable work of international alumni chapters;
  - The success of the athletics alumni club, the Granite City Harriers.

The Committee members were impressed by the range of activities and noted that, despite being a small team, the Alumni Relations team have successfully achieved many accomplishments.

The Convener thanked Mrs Allan for her update.

9. **BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING DATES 2018/19**

The Committee noted the dates.

10. **DRAFT COURT MINUTES FROM 12 DECEMBER 2017 MEETING AND REPORTS FROM ASSESSORS**

The Committee noted the minutes.

11. **AOCB**

No other items of business were noted.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Business Committee will be held on Thursday 7 June at 4pm in the Court Room.