

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 1998

Present: Dr R Scott Brown, Principal, Professors I Macdonald, D Houlihan, S Logan, P Sloane, B MacGregor, D Ogston, J Penman, Dr G McQuillan, Mr D Welsh, Mr J Grant, Miss M Main, Mr A Mair, Dr N Milne, Mr G Stevenson, Dr H Fullerton, Mr J Michie, Mrs A Skene, and, by invitation, Professor A Forrester with Mr S Cannon, Mr R Begg, Mr B Morton Wright, Dr P Murray, Mr R Murray, Mr M Ord, Mr R Taylor, Mr D Yule, Mrs M Barraclough and Ms M Strachan (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Clyne, Councillor C Millar, Dr G Roberts, Mr A Salvesen, Ms M Watt and Professor G Catto.

WELCOME

- 30 Professor Derek Ogston was formally welcomed to his first meeting as a General Council Assessor to the Court.

MINUTES

- 31 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 1998 were approved.

PRINCIPAL'S STATEMENT

- 32 The Principal reported that the former Principal, Professor Maxwell Irvine, had recently undergone heart surgery and it was understood that his subsequent progress was good. The Court agreed that a letter should be sent to Professor Irvine conveying their wishes for a speedy recovery.
- 33 The Principal reported that the opening of the Aberdeen University Centre for Organic Agriculture by HRH The Prince of Wales had been very successful.
- 34 The Principal expressed the Court's congratulations to Professor Forrester who had just been elected to the Council of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
- 35 At the Principal's invitation, Professor Forrester reported that a bid for £4M had been submitted to the Challenge Fund by the partnership comprising the University of Aberdeen, Heriot-Watt University, Napier University, the Robert Gordon University and Stirling University (*see minute 10 of 29.9.98*). The partnership would be informed in early December if the bid had passed the first stage of the approval process. If it had, the next submission was due in January 1999.
- 36 The Principal reported that Mr Stephen Gordon, currently Head of Estates at Angus Hospitals Trust, had been appointed as the new Director of Estates with effect from 1 January 1999.

NORTHERN COLLEGE

- 37 Professor Macdonald reported that Dundee and Aberdeen Universities awaited a response from Northern College to suggested plans. It would be necessary to complete the merger proposal by January 1999 in order to allow time for approval by each of the institutions involved prior to March 1999, the date by which it had to be submitted.
- 38 Progress had been made with regard to personnel and financial issues and it was hoped that consultations regarding space provision and needs would be completed by the end of 1998.

ADMISSIONS 1998

- 39 Professor Macdonald reported that, while the final figures for admissions in October 1998 were better than had been feared some months earlier, the University had failed to meet its overall targets for the first time for some years. He noted that, despite publicity regarding direct entry to second year for suitably qualified candidates, there had been no increase in that category of admissions. A UK-wide fall in the numbers of mature applicants was reflected in a drop in the number of applicants from Aberdeen city.
- 40 Professor Houlihan noted that, while the Faculty of Science & Engineering had achieved its targets, it had had to lower entrance standards in order to do so. He welcomed the opportunity of working with Student Recruitment Services to enhance the effectiveness of recruitment, especially with regard to Engineering.
- 41 Professor Macdonald indicated that Student Recruitment Services, which had gradually been moving the emphasis of its activities over a number of years, would develop into a full marketing operation under Ms Lorraine Manders who would succeed Dr Jennifer Carter as Director on 1 December 1998.
- 42 Professor Macdonald explained that Admissions Office staff and others had worked very hard during Clearing to good effect. The Court agreed that its congratulations should be conveyed to those involved.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

- 43 Professor Macdonald reminded members that, when the Court had approved the Strategic Plan 1998-2002 at its meeting on 30 June 1998, assurances had been given that an implementation programme would be presented to the Court subsequently. He commended the paper to members as a tool for use in the exercise of the Court's duties of governance, providing targets against which progress on the Plan's implementation could be checked. He also made clear that the Implementation Programme would have to be disseminated to individual departments and units to enable them to develop their own action plans.
- 44 In response to detailed questions on the implementation programme, the Principal explained that the Coopers & Lybrand report on the University administration would be shared with Court members shortly. He confirmed that a new Director of the Elphinstone Institute was being sought and that, in the near future, the Department of Geology would be strengthened by two senior appointments. In addition, he made clear that, dependent on the outcome of negotiations with the Association of University Teachers, it was intended that a formal system of appraisal would be introduced.
- 45 The Court noted the Implementation Programme and Dr Scott Brown suggested that, once each term, the Court should review progress on implementation against the targets specified.

RESEARCH ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (RAE)

- 46 Professor Macdonald explained that the four Vice-Principals/Deans were each responsible for their Faculty's returns for the RAE in 2001. To provide a University context for the submission, a steering group had been set up comprising Professor Sloane (Convener), Professor Macdonald, Professor Houlihan, Professor Logan, Dr Roberts and Mr Cannon.

INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (IMS) PHASE 2

- 47 The Principal reported that a bid to the Joint Infrastructure Fund (JIF) for funding for the construction of IMS Phase 2 was being prepared. The Fund was managed by the Wellcome Trust and the Medical Research Council, and Wellcome Trust managers had given advice to the University working party involved in the preparation of the bid. It was a matter for careful consideration as to whether the University's bid should be submitted by JIF's first deadline or at some later stage in the programme.

SIXTH CENTURY CAMPAIGN

- 48 Referring to the increasing importance of fundraising for UK and other European universities, the Principal reported that much work had already been devoted to the development of a major fundraising campaign for the University of Aberdeen, though much remained still to be done. It would be a long-term process, both in the need to sustain the effort over many years and in the recognition that major donations would not materialise quickly.
- 49 Mr Morton Wright gave a presentation to the Court outlining the broad campaign strategy, the structure of Phase 1 of the Campaign and the progress that had been made to date. He explained the importance of "volunteers", namely outstanding individuals, such as the Chancellor, who would assist its objectives. He detailed the Campaign's staffing structures and the core themes - largely areas of academic expertise but also including student support - which would provide a focus for fundraising. In conclusion, he explained that effort was being devoted to developing appropriate guidelines for the transparent reporting of donations.
- 50 Mr Taylor reminded the Court that the University had retained the services of Grenzebach Glier, consultants in fundraising for higher education, to advise on the development of the Sixth Century Campaign and emphasised that the Campaign would be gifts-based unlike the Quincentenary Campaign which had been events-based. The Campaign would include an Annual Fund to which alumni would be encouraged to make donations. For the first time, the University was telephoning alumni to encourage them to contribute to the Annual Fund. There had already been good numbers of positive responses but very few adverse comments on the use of that approach.
- 51 The Principal emphasised the importance of involving academic staff in the Campaign as it was their expertise and enthusiasm which would be attractive to a potential donor. Mr Taylor confirmed that members of the fundraising team were available to attend academic meetings to discuss the Campaign.
- 52 In response to a question from Mr Grant, the Principal confirmed that fundraising overheads were normally considered to be 10%-12% for major gifts and approximately 30% on smaller gifts.
- 53 Dr Scott Brown judged that the Court would welcome a formal request for approval of the Campaign and the Principal confirmed that it would be brought to the meeting to be held on 15 December 1998.

MEMBERSHIP OF COURT AND JOINT COURT-SENATE COMMITTEES
REPRESENTATION ON EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER BODIES

- 54 The Court approved recommendations from the Nominating Committee regarding membership of Court and joint Court-Senate Committees, and representation on educational and other bodies as set out in the appendix to this minute.

CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE:
REVISION TO COURT REPRESENTATION

- 55 The Court approved the recommendation of the Nominating Committee and the Senate that Court representation on the Continuing Education Policy Committee should be revised as set out in the appendix to this minute.

DIVINITY CHAIRS: BOARD OF NOMINATION

- 56 The Court noted that the Board would meet on 10 November 1998 to interview candidates for, and to make an appointment to, the Chair of New Testament Exegesis. Dr Scott Brown, a member of the Board appointed by the Court, was unable to attend on that date.
- 57 The Court approved a recommendation from Dr Roberts, Vice-Principal and Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Divinity, that Dr Milne be co-opted to the Divinity Chairs Board of Nomination for the period necessary to interview for, and make an appointment to, the Chair of New Testament Exegesis.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
UNDER THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998

- 58 The Court noted that a new Data Protection Act came into force on 24 October 1998. It noted further that there were transitional periods before the 1998 Act would come into force and that, therefore, most of the new Act would not apply to the University until its registration fell due for renewal in November 1999.
- 59 On the recommendation of the Information Management Committee, the Court approved the *Statement of Purpose under the Data Protection Act* as set out in the appendix to this minute.

INSURANCE BROKING SERVICES

- 60 On the recommendation of the Finance and Estates Committee, the Court approved the appointment of AON to provide broking, claims and risk management services to the University for a period of three years from 1 January 1999.

RECTORIAL ELECTION

- 61 The Court noted that the Senate, at its meeting on 14 October 1998, concurred with the decision of the Court that, following consultation with the Students' Representative Council, the election of a Rector of the University in succession to the late Dr Allan Macartney MEP would take place on Thursday 26 November 1998.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 1998/99

- 62 The Court noted revisions in the capital programme for 1998/99 previously approved by the Finance and Estates Committee