

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 1999

Present: Miss C Dickson Wright (in the chair), Principal, Professors D Houlihan, S Logan, P Sloane, D Ogston, B MacGregor, Mr J Grant, Mr A Mair, Dr N Milne, Mr G Stevenson, Dr H Fullerton, Mr J Michie, Mrs A Skene and Mr P Dickson with Mr S Cannon, Ms C Cook, Mr S Gordon, Dr P Murray, Mr M Ord, Mr R Taylor, Mr D Yule, Mrs M Barraclough, Mr B Morton Wright and Ms M Strachan (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from Dr R Scott Brown, Professor I Macdonald, Professor G Catto, Professor A Forrester, Dr G Roberts, Professor J Penman, Mr A Salvesen, Mr D Welsh.

MINUTES

93 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 1998 were approved.

PRINCIPAL'S STATEMENT

94 The Principal congratulated Professor Logan on his appointment to the Board of Aberdeen Royal Hospitals NHS Trust.

95 The Principal reported that the University's senior management was working very hard to achieve rapid change and indicated that, in some respects, they were working at their limits. He listed a number of major estates projects and a range of important academic developments currently in progress. The leadership of Court members was an important factor in many of those projects.

96 At the Principal's invitation, Mr Taylor referred to the paper circulated to the Court, which outlined the Sixth Century Campaign reporting standards. He informed members that the Development Trust had now identified 250 major potential donors. In addition, a pilot project to test a general telephone appeal to encourage alumni to contribute to the Annual Fund had proved successful. Mr Taylor reported that, on 8 February 1999, the Development Trust had formally approved the launch of the Sixth Century Campaign.

97 At the Principal's invitation, Dr Murray reported that numbers of applications for admission to undergraduate degrees in October 1999 had declined throughout the UK. While applications for the LLB had increased and those for a range of other degrees were at the same level as last year, there was a marked decline in science applications. At present, there was a rise in the numbers of offers made to postgraduate applicants, compared with the same time last year. It was, however, too early in the admissions cycle to reach firm conclusions regarding numbers of postgraduate admissions. He noted that, while the University had been the most successful institution in Scotland this year in attracting European Social Fund support for postgraduate courses, a reduction in the total sum available and the use of such funding for new government initiatives had meant that Aberdeen had lost 116 places, though it had still won just under 200.

98 At the Principal's invitation, Mr Cannon reported that the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) had now issued its new Guidance for Governors to replace that issued earlier in conjunction with the Chairmen of University Courts. Governing bodies would be encouraged to compare practice with benchmarks. It was proposed that a small working party of Court be established to examine Aberdeen's practice in comparison with SHEFC's guidance. Recommendations would be brought to Court before the end of the current academic year.

AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (1998)

- 99 Mr Grant reported that the Audit Committee was satisfied with the work of both internal and external auditors. The Court approved the Report for forwarding to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council.

STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR
SCOTTISH HIGHER EDUCATION

- 100 Mr Cannon explained that the document circulated by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) was a response to the findings of both the Dearing and the Garrick reports that there should be consultation with stakeholders concerning the development of higher education in Scotland. There would be a series of discussions across the University to prepare a draft response, which would be brought to the Court on 23 March 1999.

NORTHERN COLLEGE

- 101 In Professor Macdonald's absence, Mr Cannon reported that the draft academic plan had been agreed and was scheduled to be available for consultation within Northern College and the University of Aberdeen by the end of February. Work was continuing on the complex area of staff assimilation and some differences regarding estates issues remained to be resolved. The two institutions intended to submit a document to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council in the spring with a view to a vesting date of 1 August 2000.

MAJOR ESTATES ISSUES

- 102 Mr Gordon, the Estates Director, gave a presentation to the Court regarding major estates issues, both present and future. He noted that there was severe pressure on space at Foresterhill, underuse of space at Marischal College, an oversupply of student residential accommodation and major refurbishment needed at a number of sites including the Central Refectory, King's Pavilion and student residences. Expected future developments, such as the projected merger with the Northern College and the bid for funding for the Institute of Medical Sciences Phase 2, would have a major impact on the University's estate.
- 103 Mr Gordon indicated that a careful appraisal of the University's properties would be carried out. The estates strategy would be carefully reviewed to ensure that the options selected would support the provision of services needed to develop the University's research and teaching objectives.

RESOLUTION NO 212 of 1999
[CHAIRS OF PSYCHOLOGY - AMENDMENT OF TITLE]

- 104 The Court, having noted that the draft Resolution had been approved by the Senate and by the Business Committee of the General Council, decided to pass the Resolution as set out in the appendix to this minute.

DRAFT RESOLUTION No OF 1999
[CHANGES IN REGULATIONS FOR VARIOUS DEGREES]

- 105 The Court, having noted that the draft Resolution had been approved by the Senate, decided to forward it to the General Council and to make it generally available in terms of Section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966.

SCOTTISH MSc IN PRIMARY CARE:
INTER-INSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT

- 106 On the recommendation of the Senate, the Court approved a draft Inter-Institutional Agreement to govern the award of the Scottish MSc in Primary Care.

FEEs PAYABLE BY STUDENTS ON
SPLIT RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES

- 107 On the recommendation of the Joint Policy and Resource Committee, the Court approved the proposed increase in tuition fees.

INSTALLATION OF THE RECTOR

- 108 The Court noted that the installation of the Rector would be held on Wednesday 3 March 1999 at 4.00pm in the Mitchell Hall.

STRATEGIC PLAN 1998-2002:
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

- 109 The Court noted the progress with implementation of planned actions identified in the Strategic Plan.

SALE OF AURIS LTD'S SHAREHOLDING
IN CORDaH LTD

- 110 The Court noted the sale of AURIS Ltd's shareholding in CORDaH Ltd.

SIXTH CENTURY CAMPAIGN

- 111 The Court noted the report from the Director of External Relations concerning the Sixth Century Campaign.

GIFTS, BENEFACTIONS AND CHARITABLE RESEARCH AWARDS

- 112 The Court noted the report from the Director of External Relations concerning gifts, benefactions and charitable research awards that had been received by the University in the period 1 November 1998 to 31 January 1999.