

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 1999

Present: Dr R Scott Brown (in the Chair), Principal, Professor I Macdonald, Mr A Cole-Hamilton, Ms L Dromgoole, Mr J Grant, Professor D Houlihan, Councillor P Johnston, Professor S Logan, Professor B MacGregor, Dr G McQuillan, Miss M Main, Mr A Mair, Mr J Michie, Dr N Milne, Professor D Ogston, Professor J Penman, Dr G Roberts, Professor P Sloane, Mr G Stevenson and, by invitation, Professor G Catto, Professor G Graham and Professor I Torrance, with Mr S Cannon, Mr A Donaldson, Mr M Ord and Ms M Strachan (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from the Rector, Dr H Fullerton, Mr A Salvesen, Mrs A Skene and Professor A Forrester.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COURT

- 1 The Court thanked Professor MacGregor and Dr McQuillan for their service as Senate Assessors on the Court on the occasion of their last meeting. The Court welcomed Mr Cole-Hamilton and Ms Dromgoole to their first meeting of the Court, and also welcomed Professor Graham and Professor Torrance who were in attendance prior to assuming office as Senate Assessors on 1 October 1999.

MINUTES

- 2 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 1999 were approved.

PRINCIPAL'S STATEMENT

- 3 The Principal reported that he would be a member of the working party of Scottish Principals that would meet to consider future policy in the light of the Independent Review of Higher Education Pay and Conditions (the Bett Report).
- 4 The Principal reported that the King's College Campus Commission, a body set up to review accommodation and other facilities in Old Aberdeen, would bring recommendations to the Court regarding short- to medium-term estates issues. Major factors to be taken into account were accommodation for Northern College staff, student facilities and the need to expand library provision.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

- 5 Mr Cannon reported that, while the pay dispute between universities and the AUT remained unresolved, relations between the University and the Aberdeen AUT were cordial. Pending resolution of the national dispute, senior management at Aberdeen had decided that academic and academic-related staff should receive a salary increase of 3.5% on account with effect from 1 August 1999. If the national settlement were to be at a higher level, the balance would be paid at the appropriate time.
- 6 While it was still relatively early in the admissions cycle. Mr Cannon reported that admissions targets had been met in many subject areas, though shortfalls were expected in the MA, Divinity, the Health Sciences and some other Science degrees. While the overall shortfall for September 1999 admissions was not expected to be large, there was some concern regarding implications for the future and management would address the issue.
- 7 Mr Cannon reported that a project board, led by Lord Sewell, would oversee the study of Residences and Catering being undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers. A report would be brought to the next meeting of the Court.

- 8 Professor Penman reported that the QSP finance system had been implemented on time and on budget, and praised the achievement of the project team. The University now had full commitment accounting for the first time. However, there were issues that still had to be addressed to improve aspects of functionality and to make the system easier to use. Key users of the system had already been trained and it was intended that additional training would be offered to other members of staff. An internal review of the implementation would be carried out and there would also be an external audit. The Principal emphasised the importance of ensuring that issues raised by users were resolved. He and Dr Scott Brown thanked the project board and team for their work.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE-PRINCIPALS

- 9 The Court approved the recommendation from the Nominating Committee that the following be appointed Vice-Principals for the period of their Deanships, namely 1 August 1999 to 31 July 2002:
 Professor P Sloane, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences & Law;
 Dr G Roberts, Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Divinity.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COURT

- 10 The Court noted that the Chancellor had re-appointed Dr Scott Brown to serve as Chancellor's Assessor on the Court for the further period 1 October 1999 to 31 July 2000.
- 11 The Court approved the following recommendations from the Nominating Committee:
 that Dr Graeme Roberts, who was to demit office as a Senate Assessor on 30 September 1999, be appointed a Vice-Principal in membership of the Court for the period 1 October 1999 to 31 July 2000;
 that Professor Peter Sloane be reappointed a Vice-Principal in membership of the Court for the period 1 August 1999 to 31 July 2000;
 that Mr John Grant be reappointed to serve as a co-opted member for the further period from 1 October 1999 to 31 July 2001;
 that Dr Nanette Milne be reappointed to serve as a co-opted member for the further period from 1 October 1999 to 31 July 2002.
- 12 The Court noted that there were, in addition, two vacancies for co-opted members of the Court.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

DRAFT RESOLUTION No OF 1999

[REPEAL OF ORDINANCE No 407 (ABERDEEN No 82)]

- 13 Professor Graham, as Convener of the Library Users' Committee, proposed a minor amendment to the wording of the recommendation regarding the transfer of the Library Committee's functions. The Court approved the recommendation.
- 14 The Court, for its part, approved the recommendation that the Library Committee, a joint committee of the Court and the Senate, be abolished because it had fallen into disuse and decided to forward the draft Resolution to the Senate and the General Council and to make it generally available in terms of Section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966;

APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS

- 15 Consequent upon the merger of Coopers & Lybrand (the University's external auditors) and Price Waterhouse (until 31 July 1999 the University's internal auditors) to form PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), PWC chose to fulfil their contract as external auditors. Accordingly, in line with guidance from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, the Audit Committee carried out a tendering process for the provision of internal audit services.

- 16 The Court approved the recommendation from the Audit Committee that Deloitte & Touche be appointed to provide internal audit services to the University of Aberdeen for three years from 1 August 1999, subject to annual renewal and with the possibility of an extension for a further two years subject to satisfactory performance.

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

- 17 The Court approved the recommendations from the Nominating Committee as set out in the appendix to this minute.

VACATION POWERS
(See minute 210 of 29.6.99.)

Bridge of Don

- 18 In early July, the University's commercial partner, Asda, had put a revised offer to the University that was considerably lower than that originally submitted. Following careful consultation and having sought advice from the University solicitors, the working group empowered to take the matter forward advised that the revised offer should be declined as not reflecting the true value of the site. Accordingly, the Principal in consultation with Dr Scott Brown decided under vacation powers that the University would not take its collaboration with Asda further but would work alone to refine its planning application for the Bridge of Don site. The Court homologated the decision.

**Tuition fees:
distance version of MSc Project Management**

- 19 On the recommendation of Professor Houlihan, Vice-Principal and Dean of the Faculty of Science & Engineering, the Principal in consultation with the Senior Vice-Principal approved under vacation powers the following rates of fees for the MSc Project Management programme by distance learning:
- | | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| 3-credit module | £500 |
| 6-credit dissertation module | £1,000 |
- The Court homologated the decision.

GIFTS, BENEFACTION AND CHARITABLE AWARDS

- 20 The Court noted the report from the Director of External Relations regarding gifts, benefactions and charitable awards received by the University of Aberdeen in the quarter to 31 July 1999.