

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of meeting held on 13 September 2005

Present: Rector (in the Chair), Principal, Mr A Amoore, Professor P Beaumont, Professor I Booth, Mr T Brotherstone, Lady Catto, Dr D Cruickshank, Mrs S Grant, Miss A Harper, Professor D Houlihan, Mr J Leiper, Professor S Logan, Ms C Macaslan, Dr M Mackie, Dr A Mair, Mr M Moir, Mr P Richards, Mrs M Ross, Professor C Secombes, Councillor J Stewart, Mr S Styles, with Professor C Gane, Professor B MacGregor, Professor A Rodger, Mr S Cannon, Ms I Bews, Mr A Donaldson, Dr P Murray, Mrs L Manders, Mr F Stevenson-Robb, Mrs E Schofield, Dr T Webb and Mr B Purdon (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor N Haites, Councillor P Johnston, Mr M Lockhead, Mr D Marr, Mr R Ruddiman and Professor W Smith.

MINUTES

- 1 The minutes of meeting held on 28th June 2005 were approved subject to the Appendix to Minute 415, the draft Code of Practice on Student Discipline, being amended at Section 9.3 to reflect resulting changes in management responsibilities, arising from the retirement of the Director of Student Affairs.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2 Councillor Stewart declared an interest as an elected member of Aberdeen City Council in the items pertaining to Marischal College (*See Minutes 10-15 below*) and the Regional Sports Facilities (*See Minutes 16-18 below*).

STATEMENT BY THE RECTOR

- 3 The Rector expressed his delight in working with members in the best interests of the University and made clear that he would endeavour to manage his parliamentary commitments to allow him to serve the University as fully as possible.
- 4 In addition to welcoming the Rector, the Court also welcomed Dr Cruickshank, Mr Moir, and Professor Secombes as new members and noted its appreciation and thanks for Professor Cairns Smith's service as a Senate Assessor on Court over the past four years.

STATEMENT BY THE PRINCIPAL

- 5 The Principal noted the very helpful discussion regarding the future development of the University that had taken place prior to the Court at the annual strategy meeting.

LIBRARY PROJECT

- 6 Professor Gane introduced a paper which provided a brief update on the options that were currently being explored for the Library project and the steps which remained to be taken.
- 7 It was assumed that the project would have a total cost of up to £55 million and that various models of finance would be explored in further detail along with a fundraising target of £30 million. The project also needed to sit in the context of the campus Masterplan which was being developed at present, together with the ten-year infrastructure plan for capital developments.

- 8 Professor Gane reported that there had been a very encouraging response to the international design competition from which a team would be appointed to provide advice on possible solutions to the identified needs of size and scale and to develop ideas from which the University could go on to fundraise. It was anticipated that whichever team was appointed they would be introduced to the academic community in a variety of ways to ensure they were fully engaged in the project. It was agreed in addition that the Senate should also have an opportunity to consider the library project in due course.
- 9 The Court noted that the next steps would be:
1. Completion of a Campus Masterplan for the University in terms of the overall Estate.
 2. A ranking of projects to be challenged in terms of priority and costs, including recurrent costs.
 3. Further investigation of various methods of borrowing in relation to the project.
 4. A paper for Court by the end of the calendar year summarising the way ahead.

ESTATES UPDATE

Strictly Confidential

Marischal College - **Minute edited on grounds of confidentiality.**

- 10 Professor Logan introduced a paper which provided an update on the progress of negotiations with the City Council regarding the disposal of surplus parts of Marischal College.

Regional Sports Facility

- 16 Mr Cannon reported to Court that under delegated powers authorised at its meeting in June, the Principal, the Senior Lay Member and the Convener of the Joint Planning Finance and Estates Committee, had agreed that the University's capital contribution to the Regional Sports Facility be raised from £6 million to £8 million to match the increased commitment being made by the City Council.
- 17 In discussion, Court was assured that student access to the facility was of prime importance and to that end there was student representation on the project group. The business plan and governance arrangements for the facility would return to Court in due course.
- 18 The Court homologated the decision to increase the University's capital contribution.

EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

- 19 Mr Amoore reported that there had been a good level of response from members of Court to the Questionnaire on its Effectiveness. The Effectiveness Review Working Group was now conducting interviews of small groups of members and he advised that any member who would prefer a one to one meeting should contact him. It was expected that the Working Group would report to Court in December.

SHEFC FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

- 20 The Court received a copy of the SHEFC Financial Memorandum which had been amended since Court had approved it at its previous meeting on 28 June 2005.
- 21 The Court approved the amended Financial Memorandum.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*University of Aberdeen Superannuation and Life Assurance Scheme (UASLAS):
Appointment of Trustee*

- 22 The Court approved the appointment with immediate effect of Professor Gane in succession to Dr Roberts as a Trustee of the University of Aberdeen Superannuation and Life Assurance Scheme,

*Membership of Court-Senate Committees*Chapel Committee

- 23 The Court approved the appointment of Mr S Styles as a member of the Chapel Committee.

*Court Representation on Educational and Outside Bodies*Heriot-Watt University General Convocation

- 24 The Court approved the appointment: of Professor G S Milne for a further three-year period to the Heriot-Watt University General Convocation.

SHEFC CIRCULAR: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MODERNISATION

- 25 The Court noted the SHEFC Circular Letter HE/32/05 which described the approach to human resource management modernisation in higher education institutions which SHEFC would be recommending to the new Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council.

UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

- 26 The Court received for information the text of a joint press statement which had been issued last month announcing the details of the partnership approach of the universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Strathclyde to assisting the University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute in achieving full University title.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- 27 The Court noted that under delegated vacation powers authorised to the Principal and the Senior Lay Member, Mr Michael Moir had been appointed with immediate effect as a co-opted member of Court.

STUDENT APPEAL DECISIONS

- 28 The Court noted that a Court Appeal Committee had met on 2 August 2005 to hear an appeal against the decision of the Students' Progress Committee to discontinue a named student's studies for the degree of MCChB.
- 29 The Court noted that the Court Appeal Committee had agreed to ask for the matter to be re-heard by a newly configured Students' Progress Committee.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 30 It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of Court would be held on Tuesday 1 November 2005 at 2.00pm.