

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of meeting held on 22 May 2007

Present: The Rector (in the Chair), Principal, Professor P Beaumont, Mr T Brotherstone, Lady Catto, Ms J Craw, Mrs S Grant, Miss A Harper, Professor D Houlihan, Councillor P Johnston, Professor S Logan, Ms C Macaslan, Dr A Mair, Mr R Miller, Mr M Moir, Mrs M Ross, Mr R Ruddiman, Professor C Secombes, Councillor J Stewart, Mr S Styles, with Professor C Gane, Professor N Haites, Professor B MacGregor, Professor A Rodger, Mr S Cannon, Ms I Bews, Mr A Donaldson, Dr P Murray, Mrs L Manders, Dr G Mackintosh and Mr B Purdon (Clerk).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Amoore, Professor I Booth, Sir Don Cruickshank, Mr J Leiper, Mr M Lockhead and Dr M Mackie.

MINUTES

234 The Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007 were approved, subject to them recording Mr Ruddiman's apology for absence.

PRESENTATIONS BY HEADS OF COLLEGES

235 The Court noted that the meeting had been preceded by presentations from the Heads of the Colleges on recent and future developments in their respective Colleges.

APPOINTMENTS TO COURT

236 The Court noted that Councillors Johnston and Stewart had been reappointed by Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council as their respective Assessors on Court.

STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL

237 The Principal noted that the presentations by the Heads of Colleges had illustrated a range of developments that reflected the exciting intellectual changes taking place across the University.

ROWETT RESEARCH INSTITUTE MERGER

238 Professor Logan reported that discussions with the Rowett Research Institute were progressing satisfactorily. The outcome of the recent Scottish Parliamentary elections meant that the position of the new Scottish Executive would need to be clarified. (See *Minute 270*)

SFC MAIN GRANT LETTER

239 Professor Logan introduced a paper that analysed the outcome of the Scottish Funding Council's Main Grant Letter to Institutions for 2007/2008. In total, the University would receive £80.889 million from the Funding Council - an increase of 4.9% or £3.780 million on the prior year. The average increase in resources across the sector was 4.7%.

240 In discussion, it was noted that the decision by the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Funding Council to remove the cap on full-time home/EU undergraduate student numbers in priority subjects and to relax the cap for non-priority subjects was potentially very damaging to Aberdeen. It was agreed that the University Secretary should write on the behalf of Court to express its concern regarding the change and the manner in which it had been introduced.

## DRAFT INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2007-2010

- 241 Professor Logan introduced the draft Strategic Plan for 2007-2010 for further discussion.
- 242 A number of suggested amendments were made. In general the Court welcomed the Draft Plan.
- 243 The Court noted that it would receive a final draft for approval at its next meeting.

## REVENUE BUDGETS 2007/08

- 244 Professor Logan introduced a paper, outlining the Revenue Budgets for 2007/08.
- 245 The Court approved the Revenue Budgets for 2007/08 and the proposed use of the Strategic Investment Fund for 2007/08. (*See Minutes 265-266*)

## POLICY ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 246 Professor Logan introduced a draft Policy for intellectual property exploitation and revenue sharing.
- 247 It was agreed that the composition of the Strategic Business Ventures Group (SBVG) should be amended to require there to be a minimum of two additional members nominated by the Court.
- 248 The Court approved the Policy, subject to the inclusion of this amendment to the Composition of the SBVG (*Copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*).

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

- 249 Mr Cannon introduced a draft Environmental Policy for the University. The Policy would serve as the basis upon which the University would take forward a number of initiatives to address its impact on the environment and to develop a commitment to environmental sustainability.
- 250 In discussion, it was agreed that the Policy should also include a commitment to exploring the size of the University's carbon footprint and to developing means of reducing it. It was also noted that the Policy would have implications for the capital costs of new buildings, although it would likely reduce their operating costs. It was also suggested that the University should investigate whether in time it could achieve ISO 14001 for Environmental Management.
- 251 The Court approved the Policy, subject to its amendment to include a commitment regarding the University's carbon footprint.

## SENATE REPORT

*Validation Agreement: UHI/Faculty of Science and Technology, Orkney College*

- 252 The Court received a recommendation from the Senate that the Faculty of Science and Technology, Orkney College, an academic partner of UHI Millennium Institute, be validated under the terms of the accreditation agreement currently in force between the University and UHI to deliver research degree programmes in the area of Agriculture: Agronomy.
- 253 The Court, for its part, approved the recommendation.

*Amendment to the Composition of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning*

- 254 The Court was invited to approve amendments to the composition of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning.

255 The Court, for its part, approved these amendments.

#### RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

256 The Court received from the Information Strategy Committee a revised Records Management Policy and Records Retention Schedules.

257 The Court approved the revised Records Management Policy and Records Retention Schedules.

#### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY: CHANGE TO COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

258 The Court received a paper from the Joint Committee on Equal Opportunities, setting out proposed changes to the Committee structure for the oversight of equality and diversity issues.

259 Professor Gane noted that contrary to the wording in the paper, the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee had not approved the proposal. The Court, noted, that with respect to the composition of the Committee, the University and Colleges Union (UCU) had argued for specific representation on the Committee, and therefore did not support the new Committee structure in this respect.

260 The Court approved the revised arrangements and agreed to forward the proposals to the Senate.

#### RESOLUTIONS FOR APPROVAL

##### *Draft Resolution No 249 of 2007 [Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees]*

261 The Court, having noted that the draft Resolution No 249 of 2007 [Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees] had been approved by the Senate, and had been considered by the Business Committee of the General Council, and that no other representations had been received, approved the Resolution. (*Copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

##### *Draft Resolution No 250 of 2007 [Regulations for the Degrees of Bachelor of Arts in Theology (with CertHE and DipHE Options) and Bachelor of Arts in Youth Work with Applied Theology (with CertHE and DipHE Options)]*

262 The Court, having noted that the draft Resolution No 250 of 2007 [Regulations for the Degrees of Bachelor of Arts in Theology (with CertHE and DipHE Options) and Bachelor of Arts in Youth Work with Applied Theology (with CertHE and DipHE Options)] had been approved by the Senate, and had been considered by the Business Committee of the General Council, and that no other representations had been received, approved the Resolution. (*Copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

#### JOINT PLANNING, FINANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE

##### *Strategy and Planning*

263 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the following planning documents:

- Analysis of Scottish Funding Council Main Grant Letter for 2007/08
- Draft Strategic Plan 2007-2010
- Scottish Funding Council Consultation: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability

*Undergraduate Admissions*

- 264 The Court noted that the Committee had received a paper setting out admission statistics for 2007/08, as at 25 April 2007. It had noted that applications for Law had increased by 11%, and Engineering by 31%. However, excluding the controlled subjects of Medicine and Education, overall for the non-controlled subjects, the University had 29 fewer live offers than in April 2006. The Committee had noted that updated figures, due to be produced by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), would provide a more accurate representation of the University's position. It had also noted that a shortfall in recruitment would impact adversely on the budgetary position, and this would be reflected in the sensitivity analyses carried out in the Revenue Budgets 2007/08.

*Revenue Budgets 2007/08 to 2009/10*

- 265 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered proposed Revenue Budgets for 2007/08 to 2009/10. It had recommended minor changes to the presentation of the Budgets, and noted that further work was being undertaken on the indicative figures for 2008/09 and 2009/10.
- 266 The Court noted that the Committee had, for its part, approved the 2007/08 Budgets and Strategic Investment Funding, set out in the paper. (See *Minutes* 244-245)

*Monthly Management Accounts*

- 267 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the monthly management accounts to 31 March 2007.

*Capital Expenditure Sub-Committee Report*

- 268 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the proposed 2007/08 Recurrent Capital Programme for Estates and IT. The Committee had approved the recommendation to allocate £2M to Estates projects, and £1.2M to IT projects.
- 269 The Court noted that the Committee had received progress reports on various projects, including the Regional Sports Facilities, Matthew Hay, Fraser Noble, the Central Heating Station, Health Sciences, Hillhead Student Accommodation, Marischal College and Oceanlab.

*Rowett Research Institute Merger*

- 270 The Court noted that the Committee had received an oral report on progress with the merger with the Rowett Research Institute. (See *Minute* 238)

*Expenses and Benefits Policy*

- 271 The Court noted that the Committee had approved a revised Expenses and Benefits Policy, which had been amended to update allowances for travel to encourage use of public transport and to ensure that the University utilised travel options giving the best value for money.

OPERATIONAL PLAN

- 272 The Court noted that the update of the Operational Plan 2006/07 as at April 2007, was available at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/operational-plan.shtml>

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS

- 273 The Court noted Circular 27.07 from Universities Scotland which highlighted the advice that new members of governing bodies since 11 April 2005 might be required to be checked by Disclosure Scotland.

ESTABLISHED CHAIR IN MATHEMATICS

- 274 The Court noted that the appointment of Professor Geoffrey Robinson had been translated into the Established Chair of Mathematics within the College of Physical Sciences, with effect from 1 January 2007.

FUTURE BUSINESS

- 275 Members of Court were invited to forward to the Clerk any matters which they felt should be included in Court papers as future business

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 276 It was noted that the next meeting of Court would be held on Tuesday 26 June 2007 at 2.00pm in the Court Room.