

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of meeting held on 26 June 2007

Present: Rector (in the Chair), Principal, Mr A Amooore, Mr T Brotherstone, Lady Catto, Sir Don Cruickshank, Mrs S Grant, Miss A Harper, Professor D Houlihan, Councillor P Johnston, Mr J Leiper, Mr M Lockhead, Professor S Logan, Dr M Mackie, Dr A Mair, Mr R Miller, Mr M Moir, Mrs M Ross, 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, Mrs C Inglis, Dr G Mackintosh, Mrs L Manders, Mr D Beattie, Ms A Fraser (President Elect of the Students' Association) and Mr B Purdon (Clerk).

Apologies for absence were received from Professor P Beaumont, Professor I Booth, Ms J Craw, Ms C Macaslan and Mr R Ruddiman.

MINUTES

277 The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2007 were approved.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

278 Councillor Stewart declared an interest as a member of Aberdeen City Council in relation to the Regional Sports Facilities item.

279 Mr Brotherstone declared an interest as an elected official of the University and Colleges Union.

ROWETT RESEARCH INSTITUTE MERGER

280 The Court received a copy of a one page summary of the vision for a new Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health within the University.

281 Professor Logan reminded Court that the University was still awaiting clarification from the Scottish Executive of its position on certain issues of importance to the progression of the merger.

STRATEGY AND PLANNING

Draft Institutional Strategic Plan 2007-2010

282 Professor Logan introduced to Court a further draft of the Institutional Strategic Plan for 2007-2010.

283 The Court approved the Plan.

Key Performance Indicators 2006/07

284 Professor Logan introduced a paper outlining the updated key performance indicators for 2006/07.

- 285 In discussion, it was noted that future progress towards the target for part-time students was categorised as 'red'. This target was particularly challenging given the limited population of the North-East of Scotland but the University was developing a range of new courses to increase its share. Court also noted that the market for undergraduate students was proving challenging this year and that undergraduate retention rates had been identified as a concern, although an extensive programme of action to improve them had been put in place.
- 286 The Court discussed how the key performance indicators might in the future change better to report progress towards achieving the University's mission, as set out in its new Strategic Plan. It was agreed that as the University developed new performance indicators, it should include sufficient qualitative indicators as well as quantitative ones. Court was reminded that the Committee of University of Chairman had produced guidance on Institutional Performance Indicators and that part of the Court's Strategy Day in September would be dedicated to discussing the development of new performance indicators.

FINANCE AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Library

- 287 Professor Gane gave a presentation on the revised proposals for a new Library building. Court also received an update paper on the Library Project and was invited to consider the revised proposals within the context of the institutional ten-year cash flow plan (*See Minutes 343-345*).
- 288 The Court noted that as part of the ten-year cash flow plan a fundraising target of £30 million had been set for the project with £10 million of cash and £5 million of pledges projected to be achieved before commencement.
- 289 It was noted that further discussions with the planning authority and the wider community would be required, but as yet no indication had been received that the revised design of the building would be an issue. It was agreed that further consideration should be given to the use of wireless networks within the building. It was noted that the proposed programme of works would involve some levels of disruption to library users although steps would be taken, wherever possible, to minimise that. Court noted also that consideration had been given to the retention of the Queen Mother Library (QML) as a library store in preference to leasing an off-site facility. The current programme preferred, however, the demolition of QML and the use of a leased off-site facility for at least an initial period. It was accepted that the University would need to consult with a range of library users on the operation of the off-site store.
- 290 The Court approved the following recommendations, which had previously been approved by the Library Project Board, Capital Expenditure sub-Committee and the Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee:
- (i) That design work be completed to the end of Stage G, *Tender Documentation* for the new Library, the Conservation Laboratory and the Academic Square;
 - (ii) That a planning application be submitted for consideration by Aberdeen City Council;
 - (iii) That £3.6 million be released from general endowments which, along with funding rolled forward from 2006/07, would cover anticipated expenditure in 2007/08 of £3.998 million;
 - (iv) That the base project budget be increased from £55.5 million to £57.3 million;
 - (v) That construction be re-phased in line with the institutional ten-year cash flow plan to take place in 2010/11-2011/12, at an additional cost of ca. £6.6 million inflation.

- 291 The Court also noted that the recommended re-phasing as set out above would cost £67 million, rising to £71.5 million if the decision were taken in future to proceed with the Conservation Laboratory and Additional Landscaping.

Regional Sports Facilities

- 292 Mr Cannon introduced a paper on the Regional Sports Facilities (RSF) project.
- 293 The Court noted that following competitive tendering for the construction of the (RSF), a single tender submission had been received. The initial analysis of the tender suggested that the estimated cost of the project would exceed the approved budget by £3.3 million (13%). Negotiations were, however, continuing to determine a final tender price. Assuming the overall project cost were to increase by this amount, the University's contribution would increase by £1.643 million to £10.368 million.
- 294 The Court noted that the proposed financing of the project had been reviewed, and that it was now proposed that the University and the City Council each provide the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with 50% of the funding gap, i.e., the net amount required after deducting from the capital cost the funding provided by sportscotland.
- 295 The Court also noted that the management and governance arrangements involved the establishment of a new company (Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)) to construct and manage the facilities. The City Council had requested a review of the ownership options of the SPV, which would now either be a 100% subsidiary of the University with Council nominees on the Board or a joint venture company equally owned by the University and the Council. A review of these options was continuing.
- 296 The Court approved recommendations that it:
- i. Note the tender return for the RSF and the ongoing work being completed to define and reduce the project costs
 - ii. Agree to capital funding not exceeding £10.368 million, subject to matching funding by Aberdeen City Council and note that all additional sources of finance would be investigated to reduce the University's overall contribution
 - iii. Note that the delegated powers previously agreed by Court to allow acceptance of tenders would be required in the case of this project
 - iv. Note the proposed revised financing arrangements and potential overall capital and ongoing revenue project cost
 - v. Note the proposed management and governance arrangements and delegate powers to agree the outstanding management and governance issues
- 297 The Court noted that the final four recommendations were conditional on Aberdeen City Council, through their respective Committees, accepting the revised project cost and endorsing the financing, management and governance arrangements.

Updated 10 Year Cash Flow Plan

- 298 Ms Bews introduced a paper which updated the 10-year cash flow plan, approved by the Court in December 2006. The revised plan incorporated changes in the costs of various projects, a re-profiling of the assumptions on fundraising and a revised timeline.

299 The Court noted that a fundraising target for the library project of £30 million had been set with £10 million of cash and £5 million of pledges projected to be achieved before commencement. In discussion, it was confirmed that should that target be achieved earlier than anticipated, either through fundraising or via other income streams, then the project might commence at an earlier stage. Likewise, if fundraising was less than anticipated then the project would not proceed at that stage unless other funding had been identified. In either event Court approval would be required. (*See Minutes 287-291*)

300 The Court approved the updated plan and authorised Senior Management to take forward the Matthew Hay, Regional Sports Centre and Library projects.

5 Year Financial Forecasts

301 Ms Bews introduced a paper which reported to the Scottish Funding Council, the Strategic Plan Forecast (SPF) for 2007-08 to 2009-10, along with the forecast outturn for the current financial year 2006-07.

302 The Court approved the Strategic Plan Forecast for submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

Quarterly Financial Update

303 Ms Bews introduced a paper on the management accounts for the first nine months of 2006/07.

304 The Court noted the paper.

HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT

305 Professor Rodger introduced the University Health and Safety Committee Annual Report for 2006/07.

306 The report drew two particular matters to the attention of Court:

- (1) the discovery of asbestos contamination in several of the University's heating system plant rooms and ducts, and the steps which were being taken to improve the University's arrangements for the management of asbestos materials.
- (2) a mountaineering accident in the Cairngorms during November 2006 which had resulted in the death of an undergraduate student.

307 The Court noted the report.

SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON MONITORING, EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

308 Professor Logan introduced a draft response to the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) consultation on monitoring, evaluation and accountability. The Court also received for information a copy of the SFC consultation paper.

309 The Court approved the University's response for submission to the SFC.

STAFFING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Equal Pay Review and Statement

310 The Court received a series of recommendations from the Staffing and Development Committee, with respect to the Equal Pay Review and the Equal Pay Statement. The Court agreed to note the Equal Pay Review and approve the Equal Pay Statement.

311 It was agreed that in future, additional documentation, not included in a report should be made available online for Court members to access.

Revisions to Redundancy Procedures

- 312 The Court received, on the recommendation of the Staffing and Development Committee, a paper outlining changes to the University's Redundancy Procedures, arising as a result of the Equality Impact Assessment process and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations.
- 313 The Court agreed that the recommendations be approved, subject to their approval by the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee

New Terms and Conditions of Employment for Senior Academic General Practitioners

- 314 The Court received, on the recommendation of the Staffing and Development Committee, a paper outlining amendments to the terms and conditions of employment for Senior Academic General Practitioners.
- 315 The Court approved the recommended amendments to the terms and conditions of employment for Senior Academic General Practitioners.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- 316 The Court, on the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, approved the following:

Re-appointment of Vice-Principals

- 317 Professor S D Logan, Senior Vice-Principal

To be re- appointed for a term of four years, to 31 July 2011.

- 318 Professor C Gane, Vice-Principal (Library and Information Services)

To be re-appointed for a term of three years, to 31 July 2010.

- 319 Professor N Haites, Vice-Principal and Head of College of Life Sciences and Medicine

To be re-appointed for a term of three years, to 31 July 2010.

- 320 Professor D Houlihan, Vice-Principal (Research and Commercialisation)

To be re-appointed for a term of two years, to 31 July 2009.

Membership of Court Committees and Joint Court-Senate Committees 2006/07

- 321 The Court received a paper from the Nominating Committee recommending appointments to Court and Joint Court-Senate Committees for 2006/07.
- 322 Owing to inaccuracies in the paper, it was agreed that the paper be withdrawn and brought back to the next meeting of Court. It was also agreed that Court members should be made aware of any vacancies prior to meetings of the Nominating Committee so that nominations from members could be considered.

Court Representation on External Organisations

- 323 The Court received a paper from the Nominating Committee, recommending appointments of representatives of Court on external organisations.
- 324 The Court agreed where the paper had recommended indefinite extensions to appointments that the recommendation be amended to a term of office of three years.

325 The Court approved the following appointments:

Burn, Glenesk, by Edzell: Management Committee

326 Dr J Geddes, Senior Lecturer, History of Art for a further period of 3 years to 31 July 2010.

Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (HRFCA)

327 Mr S Duggan, Director of Student Support Services for a further period of 3 years to 31 July 2010.

Scottish Museums Council

328 Dr A Knox, Manager, Historic Collections for a further period of 3 years to 31 July 2010.

University Court of the University of Liverpool

329 Professor A Garden for a further period of 4 years to 31 July 2011.

Board of the UHI Millennium Institute

330 Dr Mair as the University's representative for a period of 1 year to 31.07.2008

331 *Divinity Chairs: Board of Nomination*

Principal	<i>Ex officio</i>
Professor J Swinton (Divinity)	3 years to 30.09.2010
Professor B MacGregor (Head of College)	3 years to 30.09.2010
Professor J Webster (Divinity)	3 years to 30.09.2010
Professor T Salmon (Politics)	3 years to 30.09.2010
Miss A Harper (Court member)	3 years to 30.09.2010

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Re-appointment of Internal Auditors

332 The Court, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee, approved the re-appointment of Deloitte and Touche as the University's Internal Auditors, for a further year from 1 August 2007 to 31 July 2008.

SENATE REPORT

Validation Agreement: UHI/Faculty of Biochemistry and Genetics, Ness Foundation

333 The Court, for its part, approved on the recommendation of the Senate, a proposal that the Faculty of Biochemistry and Genetics, based at the Ness Foundation, 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 Biochemistry and Genetics.

College of Physical Sciences – School Structure within the College

334 The Court, for its part, approved on the recommendation of the Senate, proposals from the College of Physical Sciences for the establishment of two Schools - of Engineering and of Natural & Computing Sciences - from the existing School of Engineering and Physical Sciences.

Student Affairs Committee

335 The Court, for its part, approved on the recommendation of the Senate, revisions to the remit and composition of the Student Affairs Committee.

BIOLOGICAL SERVICES UNITS COMMITTEE

336 The Court approved, on the recommendation of the Committee on Biological Services Units, a Policy Statement on the Use of Animals in Research (*Copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

DRAFT ORDINANCE NO OF 2007
[INCORPORATION INTO THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
OF THE ROWETT RESEARCH INSTITUTE]

- 337 The Court approved a draft Ordinance [Incorporation into the University of Aberdeen of The Rowett Research Institute], and agreed to its formal submission to the Privy Council following its approval by the Senate and the General Council, and public display for the statutory period.

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

- 338 The Court approved the Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan which had been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2006. (*Copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

VACATION POWERS

- 339 The Court approved a proposal that, notwithstanding the powers already delegated by Court in respect of the Matthew Hay, Fraser Noble and Regional Sports Facilities projects, for the period between its meetings on 26 June and 11 September 2007 it delegate authority to act on its behalf:
- (i) on any Estates-related matter of particular urgency to a small committee composed of the Principal, Senior Vice-Principal, Senior Lay Member, Convener of the Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee and the Convener of the Capital Expenditure Sub-Committee, or three of the five, if members were to be unavailable, and;
 - (ii) on any other matter of particular urgency to a small committee composed of the Principal, the Senior Lay Member and/or the Senior Vice-Principal.

JOINT PLANNING FINANCE AND ESTATES COMMITTEE

Strategy and Planning

- 340 The Court noted that the Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee had received and considered the Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010. The Committee had endorsed the Plan for approval by the Court, subject to minor amendments. (*See Minutes 282 and 361*)

Updated 10-year Cash Flow Plan

- 341 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a paper updating the 10-year cash flow plan.
- 342 The Court noted that the Committee had, for its part, approved the updated 10-year cash flow plan and recommended its adoption to the Court. (*See Minute 298-300*)

Library

- 343 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a paper setting out a revised library scheme at a cost of £57.3 million, which had the unanimous support of the Library Project Board, and which had been endorsed by the Capital Expenditure Sub-Committee at its meeting on 4 June 2007. (*See Minutes 287-291*)
- 344 The Court noted that the Committee had discussed the proposed re-phasing of the Library project, noting that this reflected the updated cash-flow plan. It had also noted that the recommended re-phasing would cost an estimated £67 million, rising to £71.5 if the decision was taken in future to proceed with the Conservation Laboratory included in the design, and additional landscaping.
- 345 The Court noted that the Committee had, for its part, approved the following recommendations:

- (i) That design work be completed to the end of Stage G, *Tender Documentation* for the new Library, the Conservation Laboratory and the Academic Square;
- (ii) That a planning application be submitted for consideration by Aberdeen City Council;
- (iii) That £3.6 million be released from general endowments which, along with funding rolled forward from 2006/07 would cover anticipated expenditure in 2007/08 of £3.998 million;
- (iv) That construction be re-phased in line with the institutional 10-year cash flow plan to take place in 2010/11-2011/12, at an additional cost of ca. £6.6 million inflation.

Regional Sports Facilities

- 346 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a paper on progress with the Regional Sports Facilities (RSF). (*See Minute 292-297*)
- 347 The Court noted that the Committee had agreed that additional sources of finance and potential savings should be explored fully to meet the additional £3.3 million. Subject to this, it conditionally supported the recommendation to agree capital funding not exceeding £10.368 million, £1.643 million over the budget originally approved, on the understanding that matching funding was provided by Aberdeen City Council. It had noted that the tender would be considered under the delegated powers agreed by Court at its meeting on 20 March 2007.

Five-year financial forecasts

- 348 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the Strategic Plan Forecast for the period 2007/08 – 2009/10, and had noted that this would be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council by 30 June 2007 along with the forecast outturn for the current financial year (2006/07). (*See Minutes 301-302*)

Monthly Management Accounts

- 349 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered the monthly management accounts to 30 April 2007.

Capital Expenditure Sub-Committee Report

- 350 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a report of the meeting of the Capital Expenditure Sub-Committee, held on 4 June 2007, and had noted progress reports on various projects, including the Regional Sports Facilities, Fraser Noble, the Central Heating Station, Health Sciences, Hillhead Student Accommodation, Marischal College, and Oceanlab.
- 351 The Court noted that two tenders had been returned for the Matthew Hay project, and that these were currently being assessed.

RAE 2008

- 352 The Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a report on progress with preparations for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise. (*See Minute 353*)

RAE 2008 PLANNING UPDATE

- 353 The Court received for information a paper which gave an update on the progress of the Research Assessment Exercise for 2008. (*See Minute 352*)

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Internal Audit Reports

- 354 The Court noted that the Committee had approved the following internal audit reports from Deloitte & Touche.

Strategic Planning (Report No. 1 of 2006/07)
 Consultancy Services (Report No. 2 of 2006/07)
 People Management (Report No. 3 of 2006/07)
 Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (Report No. 8 of 2006/07)

- 355 The Court also noted that the Committee had approved Follow-Up Report 1 of 2005/06 Recommendations (Report No. 4 of 2006/07), in respect of the following areas: Assisted Reproduction Unit; Estates Management; Shops and Conferencing; Research Grant Income; and the School of Social Science.

Fraud Report

- 356 The Court noted that the Committee had received a report on a recent incident of fraud within the University. The Court noted that the Committee was satisfied that timely and appropriate action had been taken.

Internal Audit Plan and Audit Needs Assessment 2007-2010

- 357 The Court noted that the Committee had considered and approved the Internal Audit Plan and Audit Needs Assessment 2007-2010, together with the Internal Audit Operational Plan for the audit year 2007-2008.

2006/07 External Audit Plan

- 358 The Court noted that the Committee had received and approved the 2006/07 External Audit Plan (PricewaterhouseCoopers).

SENATE REPORT

Merger with the Rowett Research Institute

- 359 The Court noted that the Senate, for its part, had approved the Ordinance in regard to the merger with the Rowett Research Institute. (*See Minute 281-282*)

Equality and Diversity Committee Structure

- 360 The Court noted that the Senate, for its part, had approved the proposals to revise the Equality and Diversity Committee Structure in the University approved by the Court on 22 May 2007.

Strategic Plan 2007-2010

- 361 The Court noted that the Senate, for its part, had approved the University Strategic Plan for 2007-2010. (*See Minute 282*)

Election of Senate Assessors to the University Court and the Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee

- 362 The Court noted that the following had been elected to serve as Senate Assessors on the University Court for the period 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2011.

- 363 College of Arts & Social Sciences
 Professor C Fynsk

College of Physical Sciences

364 Dr P Edwards
365 Professor GR Robinson

366 The Court also noted that Professor Fynsk had been elected to serve as a Senate Assessor on the Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee for the period 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2011.

STAFF PROMOTIONS

367 The Court received and noted from the Staffing and Development Committee a series of decisions pertaining to staff promotions, resulting from the annual promotions exercise.

PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR INFORMATION

368 The Court was informed that the following papers were available on request from Policy, Planning & Governance:

- (i) DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTERHILL MASTER PLAN
- (ii) WIDENING ACCESS RETENTION PREMIUM: PLANNING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS: SFC Circular SFC/23/2007
- (iii) UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS & COLLECTIONS BID FOR 'RECOGNISED COLLECTIONS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE STATUS

FUTURE BUSINESS

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

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

370 The Court noted the dates of its meetings for session 2007/08 as follows:

10 September 2007	Court Dinner, 7.00pm for 7.30pm, venue and timings to be confirmed
11 September 2007	Court Meeting/Strategy Day, 9.00am to 5.00pm; venue and timings to be confirmed
30 October 2007	2.00pm
11 December 2007	2.00pm
5 February 2008	2.00pm
17 March 2008	2.00pm
	This meeting of Court will be on a Monday rather than a Tuesday
20 May 2008	2.00pm
24 June 2008	2.00pm