

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of meeting held on 11 September 2007

Present: Rector (in the Chair), Principal, Mr A Amoore, Professor P Beaumont, Mr T Brotherstone, Lady Catto, Ms J Craw, Sir Don Cruickshank, Ms A Fraser, Professor C Fynsk, Mrs S Grant, Miss A Harper, Professor D Houlihan, Councillor P Johnston, Mr J Leiper, Mr M Lockhead, Professor S Logan, Ms C Macaslan, Dr M Mackie, Dr A Mair, Mrs M Ross, Professor C Secombes, with Professor C Gane, Professor A Rodger, Mr S Cannon, Ms I Bews, Mr A Donaldson, Mrs C Inglis, Dr G Mackintosh, Dr P Murray, Mrs L Manders and Mr B Purdon (Clerk).

Apologies for absence were received from Professor I Booth, Dr P Edwards, Professor N Haites, Professor B MacGregor, Mr M Moir, Professor G Robinson, Mr R Ruddiman, Councillor J Stewart and Mr S Styles.

- 1 The Rector noted that Professor Beaumont, Mrs Ross and Mr Styles had reached the end of their respective terms of office as Senate Assessors on Court. The Rector also noted that Mr Brotherstone had decided to resign with effect from 12th September 2007 as a Senate Assessor on Court due to his increased national role within the University and Colleges Union. The Court thanked all of the retiring members for their extensive contribution to the work of the Court over a number of years.
- 2 The Rector welcomed Mrs Angela Fraser, President of the Students' Association to her first meeting as a member of Court. The Rector also welcomed Professor Chris Fynsk to the meeting (in attendance), who would formally become a Senate Assessor on Court on 1st October 2007.
- 3 The Rector also welcomed to the meeting, Dr Jonathan Daube, who was in attendance as the President of the University of Aberdeen Development Trust USA.

MINUTES

- 4 The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2007 were approved.

STRATEGY MEETING

- 5 It should be recorded that the Court had met informally on the morning of 11th September 2007 to discuss a number of issues regarding governance and monitoring institutional performance.

STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL

- 6 The Principal reported to Court that the unaudited results for the Financial Year ending 31st July 2007 had just been published. These would be shared with members of Court in due course, but they suggested that the University had achieved a £3.7million surplus, which was ahead of budget by £235k.
- 7 The Principal invited Mr Cannon to brief Court on issues that had emerged regarding the availability of student accommodation for the forthcoming new academic term. The Court noted the steps the University was taking to address the problem.
- 8 The Principal reported that the results of the National Student Survey had placed Aberdeen as 2nd in Scotland and 16th in the UK. The result was very encouraging and would help Aberdeen's position in other ranking tables conducted by the media.
- 9 The Principal reminded Court that this session would see the University commence a project to reform the curriculum. The Principal noted that a more fuller discussion of the curriculum would be brought to Court in due course but in the meantime he shared with Court a document which commented on some of the issues involved.

- 10 The Principal informed Court that he believed the international market for academic staff continued to offer opportunities to recruit leading scholars to Aberdeen. In that context, the University was considering how it might make available to the Colleges more central funding for recruiting academic staff.

FUNDRAISING

- 11 Mrs Manders, Director of External Affairs, presented to Court a report on the progress of the University's Sixth Century Fundraising Campaign. The Report summarised recent progress and benchmarked the University's performance in this area with other UK universities.
- 12 Mr Daube, as President of the University of Aberdeen Development Trust USA gave Court a brief report on its activities in North America.

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

- 13 The Court received the Human Resources Strategy. In discussion, concern was expressed that the strategy had not been discussed with local representatives of the University and Colleges Union through the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee. Mr Cannon informed Court that the strategy was considered to represent a programme of work to take forward the Human Resource dimension of the University's Strategic Plan and that as such it pulled together a range of existing policies that had all been subject to discussion with campus trade unions. Mr Cannon acknowledged that the document contained implementation targets that had been set several months ago by the University and that some of these might now be unrealistic.
- 14 The Court approved the Human Resources Strategy.

SENATE REPORT

Draft Resolution No 251 of 2007
[Amendments to Regulations for Postgraduate Study]

- 15 The Court approved, on the recommendation of the Senate, the Resolution No 251 of 2007 *[Amendments to Regulations for Postgraduate Study]* without forwarding it to the Business Committee of the General Council and generally making it available, as provided for, exceptionally, by Section 6 (2) of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, so that the amended provisions may be applied with effect from 15 September 2007.

Draft Resolution No 252 2007
[Seventh Amendment to Schedule A to University Court Ordinance 111 (Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus)]

- 16 The Court approved, on the recommendation of the Senate, the Resolution No 252 of 2007 *[Seventh Amendment to Schedule A to University Court Ordinance 111 (Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus)]* without forwarding it to the Business Committee of the General Council and generally making it available, as provided for, exceptionally, by Section 6 (2) of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, so that the amended provisions may be applied with immediate effect.

CHANGES TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

- 17 The Court received a paper from the Business Committee of the General Council outlining proposed changes to Standing Order No 1 which were being proposed to introduce more flexibility to the timing of the General Council's Statutory Meetings.
- 18 The Court approved the proposed changes to Standing Order No 1 (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- 19 The Court, on the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, approved the composition of Court and Joint Court-Senate Committees for the academic year 2007/08. (*Copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*).

UASLAS PENSION SCHEME CHANGES

- 20 The Court noted a letter from the Chairman of the University of Aberdeen Superannuation and Life Assurance Scheme detailing changes to the funding of early retirements within the Scheme.

ORDINANCE: COMPOSITION OF THE SENATE

- 21 The Court noted that Draft Ordinance No 138 [Amendments to the Composition of the Senatus Academicus] approved by Court on 20 March 2007 had been approved by the Privy Council.

FUTURE BUSINESS

- 22 Members 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:

- 23 It was noted that the next meeting of Court would be held on Tuesday 30th October 2007 at 2pm in the Court Room