

THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN and THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY
MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee on Monday 6 December 2010

Present:

Dr J Grieve (Convener), Chief Petty Officer S Bagen (*vice* Lieutenant M Hutchinson), Mr P Fantom, Mr J Lemon, Lieutenant Colonel K Wardner; with Miss C Singer and Ms Y Gordon (Clerk).

Apologies:

Professor D Alexander, Lt Cdr RN G Atkinson, Professor J Broom, Ms C Buchanan, Dr A Clark, Professor I Diamond, Professor A Flin, Professor J Harper, Lt M Hutchinson, Wing Commander BJO Kennedy and Professor P Robertson.

The Convener invited members to introduce themselves and welcomed all to the meeting. It was unfortunate that no representatives from RGU were able to attend the meeting.

1. Minutes

1.1 The Committee approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 December 2009.
(copy filed as MEC10/1)

COMEC (minute 3 refers)

1.2 The Committee noted that Mr Lemon had not been able to attend the meeting of COMEC in September 2010, but that he hoped to be in a position to attend in 2011.

UOTC Funding cuts (minute 4 refers)

1.3 Lieutenant Colonel Wardner reported that payment for UOTC cadets had restarted.

Pro-active Support (minute 4.3 refers)

1.4 The Head of the UoA Careers Service reported that Careers could facilitate a promotional presentation event for the three military cadet services to raise their profile to the student body.

Action: Bagen/Wardner/Fantom

2. Membership

Members were invited to recommend two University of Aberdeen staff to fill the current vacancies.

2.1 The Committee proposed that we invite membership via the 'dept-staff' email account; that if interested they could contact the Convener to chat about the role of the committee. The army and navy representatives extended an invitation to any interested parties to attend a drill night if they wanted to view what took place there.

Action: Clerk

3. Unit Progress Reports/Presentations

UOTC

3.1 The UOTC report was received, and a presentation was given, by Lt Col Wardner on the Strategic Defence and Security Review and the future of the Aberdeen UOTC, the principle points are given below:
(copy filed as MEC10/2a)

- Under the UOTC Review all UOTCs have been under scrutiny, but particularly the four Scottish UOTCs. Some UOTCs in England have already merged such as Oxford and Southampton.
- Aberdeen will have to raise its recruitment level and any assistance the University can give to raising the profile of the UOTC would be welcome. Recruitment from RGU is not good and perhaps this is because of the current name of Aberdeen Universities UOTC. The name could be changed to City of Aberdeen UOTC to make it more attractive to RGU students;
- The Aberdeen UOTC budget has been cut significantly, by 50%, impacting on recruitment and the activity programme that can be offered to cadets;
- Under the SDS Review 7000 army posts are to be lost by 2015. For the Grampian Region RAF Kinloss is already closing and it is likely that one of either Lossiemouth or Leuchars will also close. The UOTC draws its staff from TA Units and if they close there will be no staff to train the student cadets.
- The Review causes alarm, but it is hoped that the Aberdeen UOTC will remain.
- Lt Col Wardner clarified that students from Commonwealth countries could be recruited to the UOTC;

URNU

3.2 The URNU annual report was received. CPO Bagen reported the principle points below: (copy filed as MEC10/2b)

- 48 students had been recruited out of a maximum of 51 permitted. URNU cadets were still paid from day 1;
- HMS Archer had been away from Aberdeen on activities for 8 months last year and was expected to be away for a similar time period this year, the 2011 programme was starting to firm up. Archer's profile was raised in 2010 due to its appearance on BBC television on more than one occasion, and in other media;
- Archer's base port in Aberdeen is under threat. If it were to be forced to move the nearest suitable port is in Rosyth, the impact of which would mean a 4-hour return trip for sea training i.e. a non-starter;

- Gordon Barracks is in a state of disrepair, but is ideal for the Unit. Some funding is in place to restore parts of the building but impacts on the finance available to (say) provide new uniforms for cadets. There are no new uniforms for cadets, who now wear ill-fitting second hand garments. DMS boots are required on ship and there are none at present to kit out any new cadets;

The Committee expressed its concern and the Convener undertook to write to the Flag Officer Scotland Northern England & Northern Ireland (FOSNNI), particularly regarding the state of the uniform when cadets were expected to parade and be inspected by high ranking officers. To save money he would also suggest that visitors to social events could pay their own mess bills rather than the Navy paying these charges.

Action: Convener

UAS

3.3 No report was received from the UAS.

4. Elphinstone Defence Lecture

2009/10

4.1 The Elphinstone Defence Lecture took place on Thursday 11 March 2010 in the University of Aberdeen. The lecture was given by Angus Robertson MP "*The Strategic Defence Review and the options for Scotland*".

2010/11

4.2 It was reported that Admiral Lord Boyce had been invited to present the fifteenth Elphinstone Defence Lecture in March 2011. A response from him was awaited.

[Note by Clerk: Unfortunately Lord Boyce was unable to accept the invitation due to other commitments. An invitation has now been extended to the Director General of the Defence Academy.]

5. Royal Airforce Presentation Team

5.1 The Committee considered its response to an invitation from the above team asking if they could make a presentation to the University.

(copy filed as MEC10/3)

5.2 It was agreed that the response should propose a joint presentation of all three services, as above (minute 1.4 above refers).

Action: Fantom

6. STAR Award Project

6.1 The Head of Careers and the STAR Award Project Officer reported the following:

- STAR denotes *Students Taking Active Roles*. It was introduced as part of Curriculum Reform, it is a co-curricular award and not part of the academic curriculum. The Star Award leaflet carries examples of the type of recognised role that a student could undertake;
- As well as participating in one of the recognised roles, students must also attend two development workshops. The Award is split into Gold, Silver and Bronze recognition, and students can choose which level to tackle. In order to be awarded the STAR Award students must submit evidence of their activities and skills development, which are then assessed (competency based) against the achievement of five employability-related Aberdeen Graduate Attributes. Employers are also involved;
- There are 183 students currently registered for the Award. At present students receive a signed certificate of award but in the future, as part of the HEAR project, students will receive an enhanced student transcript.

6.2 It was agreed that the Head of Careers and the Services should meet to discuss some of the Service Units' work becoming a recognised role to be able to offer the STAR Award to cadets in the future. It was proposed that the Bronze Award could equate to successful completion of the requirements of year 1 in the Unit, Silver Year 2 and Gold Year 3.

Action: Fantom/Wardner

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 5 December 2011 at 11.30 am. The meeting is scheduled to be hosted by the Robert Gordon University.

7.2 It was proposed that, as no-one from RGU had been able to attend this meeting, that a further meeting of the Committee should take place in advance of the EDL dinner.

8. Committee Remit

8.1 The Committee noted the following remit which was approved in 1993 by the Court and Senate of the University of Aberdeen and by the Academic Council and the Board of Governors of the Robert Gordon University:

(a) To direct the policy of the Officer Training Corps, the Air Squadron and Royal Naval Unit (the three Service Units) within the University of Aberdeen and the Robert Gordon University (the Aberdeen Universities).

(b) To co-operate and liaise with the Ministry of Defence in all service matters affecting the Universities.

(c) To encourage the study of National Defence within the Universities and to secure Military Science its due place in University studies.

(d) To ensure that the time spent by students with the Service Units is not to the detriment of their academic studies.

(e) To promote instruction and training for candidates for commissions in the Armed Services.

(f) To foster an interest in, and an understanding of, the Armed Services and to provide leadership training in a military environment.

(g) To approve recommendations for the posts of Commanding Officers of the three Service Units.

9. Composition and Membership

The Committee's composition and membership were noted:

The University of Aberdeen

Senate Principal and 7 nominees:
(Dr Clarke, Mr Fantom, Professor Flin, Dr Grieve (Convener), Mr Lemon). There are 2 vacancies.

The Robert Gordon University

Board of Governors Principal and 1 nominee (Professor Alexander)

Academic Council 3 nominees
(Professors Robertson and Broome and Mrs Buchanan)

Ex Officiis

Post

CO AUOTC
Oi/c AURNU
OC ESUAS
Commander, 51 Bde
Secretary, Highland RFCA
FOSNENI Staff Officer
University Liaison Officer, Army
University Liaison Officer, RN
University Liaison Officer, RAF

Current individuals

Lieutenant Colonel MR Wardner, MERCIAN
Lieutenant M Hutchinson RN
Squadron Leader G Gusterson RAF
Brigadier GE Lowder, MBE
Colonel AK Miller, CBE
Lieutenant Commander G Atkinson RN
Lieutenant Colonel (ret'd) NS Southward
Lieutenant Commander S Lister RN
Wing Commander BJO Kennedy *