THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN and THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee on 5 June 2012

Present: Dr J Grieve (Convener, UoA), Professor I Broom (RGU), Dr A Clarke (UoA), Mr P Fantom (UoA), Professor R Flin (UoA), Mr J Lemon (UoA), Professor P Robertson (RGU), Lieutenant Colonel MCR Thorp (AUOTC), Dr P Ziegler (UoA) and Ms Y Gordon (Clerk).

Apologies: Ms C Buchanan (RGU), Professor I Diamond (UoA), Wing Commander BJ Kennedy, Squadron Leader J Lafferty (ESUAS), Lieutenant J Martin (AURNU), CPO P McCaughran (AURNU), Colonel AK Miller CBE (HRFCA), Professor von Prondzynski (RGU), Mr J Wyllie (UoA).

Minutes

1.1 Subject to a minor change to Minute 2.3 the Committee approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 March 2012. (copy filed as MEC/050612/1)

Matters Arising

Monies Available for Prizes (Minute 2.2 refers)

2.1 Professor Robertson reported that RGU would be able to contribute £1000 annual prize fund.

Future of AURNU in Aberdeen (Minute 4 refers)

2.2 The Committee noted the letter sent by the Convener to Commodore Williams regarding the future of the AURNU in Aberdeen and that a response was awaited. (copy filed as MEC/050612/2)

2.3 A discussion ensued, the principle points are given below:

- Some members reported that they had heard that the move to the Forth was a ‘done-deal’, and that the ship had already moved to Rosyth.
- It was very disappointing and could be the end of the AURNU at Aberdeen. ESUAS students already found it difficult to travel to St Andrews and Leuchars, and this would be further away.
- That support to try to prevent the AURNU moving could be forthcoming from: Angus Robertson MP; the Lord Provost who is High Lieutenant of the Seas; the President & Chairman of COMEC; the Chaplain of the Fleet who was a former graduate of the University; the Presidents of the two Student Associations.
- The CO of the AUOTC offered support to AURNU students e.g. offering classrooms if required.

2.4 The Convener agreed to write on behalf of the MEC to Flag Officer Scotland & Northern Ireland (FOSNI) and encouraged members to raise the issue wherever possible.

Action: Convener
Unit Updates

AUOTC

3.1 The Committee considered recommendations arising from a meeting Lt Col Thorp had with the Principal of UoA on 23 May 2012. (copy filed as MEC/050612/3a)

3.2 Lt Col Thorp had asked the Principal to consider if the University might be able to a) offer any incentives as means to attract and retain Territorial Army staff within the AUOTC, such as reduced fees or bursaries and b) write to the new Commandant offering continued support for the Service Units, acknowledging the perceived value they bring to the Universities and to the students, for example enhancing their employment prospects.

3.3 The reason for this request related to the likelihood of Tayforth and Aberdeen UOTCs coming under a single HQ, with the location of the HQ still to be determined. In addition there had been difficulties recruiting part-time instructors, placing limits on the Unit’s ability to deliver quality military training and leadership development opportunities to the students. He wanted the Universities and the MEC to provide increased support in this way as he feared that the Aberdeen Unit would have its regular Army Officer removed and replaced with a Territorial Army Major instead.

3.4 Lt Col Thorp also gave an update on the Unit’s activities, and the Committee noted that the “University” Company dinner would be held on Saturday 3 November 2012.

3.5 The Convener agreed to write on behalf of the MEC to the Commandant at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). He hoped too that the Principals of the two Universities would also write a similar letter of support.

Action: Convener

ESUAS

3.6 The ESUAS report, dated 21 May 2012, gave an update on the Unit’s activities. (copy filed as MEC/050612/3c)

Elphinstone Defence Lecture 2013

4.1 The following were proposed as a possible speaker for the 17th Lecture in March 2013, to be hosted by the University of Aberdeen:

- The CO for the Joint Military Intelligence Unit (JMIU);
- The Chaplain of the Fleet
- Bob Bruce who is an Alumnus of the UOTC and has commanded a Brigade in Afghanistan

4.2 Professor Broom agreed to follow up the possibility of the speaker being the CO of the JMIU. Action: Professor Broom

Prizes

5.1 The Committee considered a letter from Squadron Leader Block regarding a quarterly prize for the ESUAS Flight Safety competition. (copy filed as MEC/050612/4)

5.2 The Committee agreed that more information was needed from the ESUAS before a decision could be reached. Action: Clerk
5.3 The Committee agreed that members should consider how the MEC might deal with prizes in the future, and bring back proposals and possible criteria to the next meeting. For example, there could be a military prize, or a sporting prize, to be presented at the next Defence Lecture.  

\textit{Action: All members}

\textbf{COMECE Freshers Fair Survey}

6.1 The Committee considered an email from COMEC surveying the practice at University Freshers Fairs on charging the Service Units to set out their stall.  

\textit{(copy filed as MEC/050612/5)}

6.2 Mr Lemon reported that the relationship with the student body changed from year to year, depending on the beliefs of the sabbatical officers in post. Generally the Service Units were not viewed as a \textit{bone fide} student club so they were charged the business rate. In 2011 the AURNU was charged the full commercial rate of £400 which came from its recruiting budget; the AUOTC provided an assault course for students and was charged a reduced rate fee.  

\textit{Action: Clerk}

\textbf{COMECE Conference}

7.1 The Committee agreed that Mr Lemon should attend the forthcoming COMEC Conference at Cranwell.

\textbf{Date of Next Meeting}

8.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on \textbf{Friday 9 November 2012 at 11.30 am.} The meeting will be hosted by the University of Aberdeen.