

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

**Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2000**

Present: Principal, Professors IR Macdonald, AR Forrester, Sloane, Logan, Houlihan and Sewel, Dr JG Roberts, Professors Cameron, Thomson, Fergusson, Urwin, Penman, Bruce, Britton, Jolliffe, Meek, Forte, Racey, Sharp, Macinnes, Jordan, Graham, Rodger, Pope, Watson, Ingram, Adams, Mather, Salmon and Torrance, Dr GJA Burgess, Dr MT Dalgarno, Dr JRW Hunter, Mr D Mannings, Dr L Foley, Mr G Pryor, Dr AR Akisanya, Mrs FM Alexander, Mr WTC Brotherstone, Dr JB Craig, Dr A Cumbers, Dr D Heddle, Dr G Hesketh, Dr MA Hutchison, Dr CT Imrie, Dr AM Kiger, Dr PR Kinnear, Dr S Lawrie, Dr JM Liversidge, Dr WF Long, Dr J Ohlmeyer, Dr J Sheehan, Dr JDF Skatun, Dr A Venneri, Dr HM Wallace, Dr J Watson, Mr A Cole-Hamilton, Mr R McGregor, Mr G Couper and Ms K Finan with Professor Prosser in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Professors Lyall, Mordue, Johnstone, Walker, Kidd, Templeton, Sleeman, WJ Harris, MacGregor, Baker, Ritchie, Hukins, Fraser, Flin, Dawson, Greaves, Archbold and Blaikie, Dr LH Chappell, Dr H Galley, Mr WS McKerrow, Dr TA Mahmood, Dr MR Masson, Dr DA Nunez, Dr JA Petty, Mrs ML Ross, Dr PVW Schlicke and Mr R Okasha.

**EMERITUS PROFESSOR JOHN WILLIAM PARSONS**

249. The Senate noted that Emeritus Professor John William Parsons BSc, PhD, FIBiol, who held the Chair of Soil Science from 1981 until 1995 and who was a former Dean of the Faculty of Biological Sciences, had died on 1 February 2000. He was a highly respected former colleague and friend of many members. The Senate recorded its sadness at Professor Parsons passing and agreed that its condolences be sent to Mrs Parsons.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

250. The minutes of the meeting of 26 January 2000 were approved.

**STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL**

**Research Income**

251. The Principal reported that the University had attracted research income in excess of £13M for the previous six months: this excluded the successful bid for £4.2M of Joint Infrastructure Funds which had been reported at the last Senate, and an anticipated EPSRC grant of £1.2M. The awards were indicative of the success of staff in their efforts to raise the University's research profile, and the Principal expressed his congratulations to all those concerned.

### **Northern College**

252. The Principal reported that the Funding Council's Mergers Committee was still considering the proposal that the relevant campuses of Northern College should merge with the Universities of Aberdeen and Dundee, and that further details on the proposed mergers were expected within the next two months. The University was actively preparing for merger in anticipation of a positive outcome from the SHEFC. As part of this preparation, the first meeting of the Shadow Faculty Planning Committee for Education would soon be held. A report on the Funding Council's decision concerning the merger would be submitted to the Senate in due course.

### **UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRES AND THE ABERDEEN RESEARCH CONSORTIUM**

- 253.1 The Senate received papers on University Research Centres and the Aberdeen Research Consortium, which had been sent recently to all Heads of Department by Professors Catto and Prosser, respectively.
- 253.2 The Principal indicated that the response to the Research Centre initiative had been very positive. A primary aim was to create the environment and opportunity for more excellent research to be undertaken, to enhance the University's performance in attracting external research income, particularly from the Research Councils. Several exciting and high quality proposals for Research Centres had been submitted which demonstrated that this aim would be achieved. It was not envisaged that, in the foreseeable future, there would be a significant change in the proportion of research funding allocated to Faculties: rather, the Research Centre model would allow a more effective focusing of resource within Faculties to support research and strengthen productivity.
- 253.3 Following an invitation from the Principal, Professor Catto informed the Senate that the papers on Research Centres and the Aberdeen Research Consortium had been sent to Heads of Department in response to the recognition that staff should be kept informed of the progress concerning these initiatives. Further, regular, updates would be sent to Heads of Department on both initiatives, as a means of raising awareness.
- 253.4 In responding to questions, Professor Catto confirmed the following:-
- (i) that while the paper on Research Centres indicated that some proposals would be funded in a way that protected R funding in the short term, there was no intention to deviate from the resource allocation model. However, there would need to be co-operation between Faculties in regard to the allocation of funds to Research Centres that involved staff from more than one Faculty. The primary aim was to support high quality proposals;
  - (ii) that peer review of proposals would be through a mechanism identified by the Deans as most appropriate to their Faculty. Different arrangements for peer review may therefore exist, but all arrangements would be robust, to ensure that informed decisions were made in regard to each proposal;

- (iii) that although 22 applications had been received to date, no decisions had been made as regards which proposals should be supported. Various stages of discussion were taking place, but no funding had been agreed or transferred.

### **TRANSPARENCY REVIEW FOR RESEARCH**

254.1 The Senate received a paper on Transparency Review, a Government initiative whereby additional funding would be made available for higher education on condition that the sector became more open about the way that public funds were spent in universities and colleges.

254.2 In presenting the paper, Professor Logan drew the Senate's attention to the following:-

- (i) that it was incumbent on all higher education institutions to ensure that their costing processes were up-to-date and reliable, as the ability to attract public funding in the future would be enhanced by the ability to account for the appropriate utilisation of funds received;
- (ii) that 8 research intensive institutions were piloting a scheme for transparency review. A model for costing activity in 1999/2000, for report by the Summer of 2001, would be developed and used by a group of 30 research intensive institutions. The outcome would provide the basis for the rest of the HEI sector, including Aberdeen University, to analyse their activity for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001, for report by January 2002;
- (iii) that the University had established a Transparency Review Working Group, with Professor MacGregor as Academic Project Manager. The Group would prepare proposals with a view to piloting a model for transparency review within a number of Departments across the University during the next few months. It was hoped that the data required would be as minimal and unintrusive as possible. The guidance to be provided to academic staff concerning data collection, and the subsequent analysis of the data by the University, would be informed by the work being undertaken in the pilot institutions;
- (iv) that the University was obliged to participate in this process and the hope was that it would lead to increased public funds for higher education.

### **REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT**

(8 February 2000)

#### **Resolution No. 219 of 2000 [Creation of a Faculty of Education]**

255. The Senate noted that the University Court had passed Resolution No. 219 of 2000 [Creation of a Faculty of Education].

**Northern European Historical Research Network:  
Inter-Institutional Agreement**

256. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the above Inter-Institutional Agreement.

**REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON  
TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**Guidance Note for Students who either Fail, or Fail to Attend or Complete,  
an Element of Prescribed Degree Assessment**

257. The Senate received a draft *Guidance Note for Students who either Fail, or Fail to Attend or Complete, an Element of Prescribed Degree Assessment*. Since suggestions had been received for amendments to two paragraphs, the Senate agreed that the document be revised to take account of these suggestions, and any others which members wished to submit to the Academic Registrar, and that the Guidance Note be referred back to the University Committee on Teaching and Learning.

**Class Certificate Refusal in Courses taken as part of an Honours Programme**

258. The Senate agreed the following recommendations. The final wording was agreed by the Convener of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, on behalf of the Senate, after discussion with those members of the Senate who had expressed some concern with the original recommendations:-
- (i) that for students admitted to an Honours programme which commences in 2000/2001 or thereafter, those who are refused a Class Certificate in a course which is part of their Honours programme, rather than being able to re-attend, will be awarded the equivalent of a No Paper (NP) for that course, i.e. a CAS mark of 0 when applied to the *Grade Spectrum* used for determining degree classification. [Such students would be in the same position as currently applies to those who fail, or who fail to attend or complete without good cause, an element of Honours assessment i.e. they could normally obtain no higher an award than a Lower Second Class Honours degree unless the Examiners applied discretion to depart from the class indicated by the *Grade Spectrum*. In addition, it should be noted (a) that, where a Class Certificate is refused in the first year of a two-year Honours programme, it may result in a student failing to satisfy the stated pre-requisite for one or more final year Honours courses and/or being deemed unsatisfactory by the Head(s) of the Department(s) in which they are studying (General Regulation 16.1(6) refers) and, hence, being excluded from their Honours programme; and (b) that where the Calendar prescription for an Honours programme explicitly states that (in addition to satisfactory attendance) either appearance for assessment in, or a pass in, a stated course is a compulsory requirement for award of a degree, a student refused a Class Certificate in that course can not normally qualify for award of the Honours degree concerned];
  - (ii) that, as a consequence of (i) above, the proviso to the definition of 'credit' in General Regulation 1, requiring that students refused a Class Certificate for a course taken as part of an Honours programme must re-attend that course (or another course of equivalent credit value) to satisfy the credit requirements of their degree programme, be rescinded; and that General Regulation 3 for First Degrees be amended, as under:-

“Every candidate for a degree must pay the required fees and, with the exception of a course taken as part of an Honours programme in which a Class Certificate has been refused or unless granted an exemption by the relevant Undergraduate Programme Committee:

- (a) attend and duly perform the work of each course required for a degree programme;
  - (b) complete the degree assessment prescribed for each such course.”;
- (iii) that, in order to enable the changes to General Regulations 1 and 3 under (ii) above to come into force in the Academic Year 2000-2001, the University Court be requested to include them in the draft Resolution “Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees”, the text of which is currently before the Business Committee of the General Council.

## **REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

### **New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes**

- 259.1 The Senate noted that the Academic Standards Committees, on the recommendation of the relevant Faculties, had approved changes to the list of courses and programmes available, as indicated in Appendix I [copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes].
- 259.2 The Senate agreed that a discussion would be held, at a future meeting, on the extent to which students should have the opportunity to, or be required to, study a broad range of subjects.

## **REPORT FROM THE STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE**

(10 February 2000)

260. The Senate approved a recommendation from the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee that a Pre-Applicant University Open Day be held on 28/29 August 2000.

## **DRAFT LIBRARY REGULATIONS**

- 261.1 The Senate considered Draft Library Regulations, which had been prepared by the Library Users’ Committee and endorsed by the Information Management Committee, to replace those currently in force.
- 261.2 The Senate approved, for its part, the Draft Library Regulations, subject to amendments being agreed between Professor Graham and the Convener of the Library Users’ Committee to address concerns expressed by Professor Graham [Appendix II: copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes].
- 261.3 The Senate noted that the Senate would discuss, at a future meeting, other issues raised by Professor Graham, including those relating to the provision and management of Library Services.

**DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. OF 2000**  
**[Fifth Amendment to Schedule A to University Court Ordinance**  
**No. 111 (Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus)]**

262. The Senate, for its part, approved and forwarded to the University Court a Draft Resolution to provide for the election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus from a new constituency, *Education*, from and after the date on which the Aberdeen campus of Northern College was vested in the University [Appendix III: copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes].

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE**

263. The Senate approved the nomination by the Faculty of Social Sciences & Law of Professor CHW Gane to replace Professor DJ Cusine on the Honorary Degrees Committee, with immediate effect.

**ACTING CONVENER OF THE UNDERGRADUATE  
PROGRAMME COMMITTEE (LAW)**

264. The Senate approved the nomination by the Faculty of Social Sciences & Law of Mr DP Lessels to serve as Acting Convener of the Undergraduate Programme Committee (Law) for the remainder of the current session during Professor PR Duff's period of sabbatical leave.

**APPOINTMENT TO ABERDEEN ENDOWMENTS TRUST**

265. The Senate approved the nomination of Dr MT Dalgarno as a Trustee to the Aberdeen Endowments Trust, initially until 15 October 2000, with the option of re-appointment until 15 October 2003.

**SUMMER GRADUATION ARRANGEMENTS**

266. The Senate noted that there would not be a Graduation Luncheon during Graduation Week in July 2000.

**GRADUATIONS *IN ABSENTIA***

- 267.1 The Senate received a list of those qualified to receive degrees and diplomas who had applied to have them conferred *in absentia* (See Appendix to the Minutes of June 2000).
- 267.2 The Senate conferred the degrees on, and awarded the diplomas and other qualifications to, the persons stated.