

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2000

Present: Principal, Professors IR Macdonald, AR Forrester, Sloane, Logan, Houlihan and Sewel, Dr JG Roberts, Professors Miller, Thomson, Urwin, Baker, Meek, Forte, Racey, Sharp, Macinnes, Jordan, Fraser, Graham, Alexander, Rodger, Freeston, Watson, Harrison, Ingram, Archbold, Swanson, Mather, Saunders, Torrance, Beaumont, Mitchell, Duff and Salmon, Dr GJA Burgess, Dr MT Dalgarno, Dr N Dower, Dr B Fennell, Dr JRW Hunter, Mr D Mannings, Mr G Pryor, Dr D Heddle, Dr CT Imrie, Dr J King, Dr PR Kinnear, Dr S Kunin, Dr S Lawrie, Dr DJ Lurie, Dr WD McCausland, Dr PFA MacConnell, Ms DW McKenzie Skene, Mr AWM McLean, Dr MR Masson, Dr AJ Mordue, Dr LJ Philip, Mrs ML Ross, Dr PVW Schlicke, Dr J Sheehan, Mr SC Styles, Dr A Venneri, Mr S Varwell, Mr M Torrance, Mr R McGregor, Mr J McGachie, Ms C Lowe and Mr J Watson.

Apologies for absence were received from Professors Cameron, Mordue, Johnstone, Templeton, Sleeman, Russell, Helms, Ritchie, Little, Killham and Flin, Dr G Hesketh, Dr AW Laing, Dr D Macphee and Dr DA Nunez.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

319. The minutes of the meeting of 14 June 2000 and of the *In Absentia* and In Person Graduation Ceremonies held between 3 and 19 July 2000 were approved.

STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL

Institute of Medical Sciences (Phase II)

320. The Principal reported that the University Court had given permission to proceed with IMS Phase II and that work was scheduled to commence on-site on 16 October 2000.

Marischal College

321. The Senate noted that negotiations concerning the future use of Marischal College were continuing with an increased sense of urgency.

Northern College Merger

322. The Principal reported that SHEFC concerns with the position in Dundee had held up the merger negotiations with Northern College. It was anticipated that a revised merger proposal would be submitted to SHEFC before Christmas and that a Vesting Day of 1 August 2001 was now likely.

Budgetary Position

- 323.1 The Principal addressed the Senate in detail on the University's budgetary position. He indicated that the text of his address would be sent, by e-mail, to all staff after the meeting, and would provide staff with more detail than that which had been included in the recently-circulated Newsletter [Appendix I: copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes].
- 323.2 Before inviting general comment, the Principal asked the Senior Vice-Principal to report on the confusion over recent decisions concerning library resources.
- 323.3 Professor Macdonald reported that the resource allocated to DISS for the current financial year, though a cash increase, was £500K less than the amount DISS believed was required to maintain service levels. As part of dealing with the budget shortfall, a decision had been taken to reduce the book fund: journals had not been targeted, partly because it was difficult to reduce journals quickly. After representations, the book fund allocation had been fully restored, with each Faculty receiving the same allocation as in 1999/2000. Distribution of the allocation within Faculties was for discussion with, and approval by, Deans.
- 323.4 Professor Macdonald indicated that he was dissatisfied with the budgeting process and with communications, and acknowledged that the overall problem of budget reduction in the future remained to be addressed.
- 323.5 The Senate noted that two-thirds of the DISS operating budget was allocated to the Library, and that the ratio of Library to IT operating expenditure had been moving in favour of the Library over recent years. Nevertheless, the Library had to endure very heavy inflation on its purchases; and there were IT budgetary pressures due to growth in demand. The key issues were to identify the University's needs and how these should be resourced, and to ensure that communication was improved. Professor Macdonald therefore proposed three steps:-
- a review of the areas of needs, resourcing and communications, to be conducted by a small group of academic users plus Professor Macdonald and another Vice-Principal, working with the current structural review being undertaken by DISS;
 - agreement by the same group on the levels of service to be required from DISS in the context of affordability and value for money;
 - some partitioning of DISS budgets so that the JPFEC could set separate budgets for the book fund, for periodicals and for electronic materials.
- 323.6 In conclusion, Professor Macdonald indicated that there could be no guarantee that funding levels would be maintained but that there would be transparency in the decision-making process and in the communication of the outcome to staff.
- 323.7 The Principal invited questions and general comments on any aspect of the budgetary position, whose principal points of record were as follows:-
- (i) that there was no obstacle to the group to be convened by Professor Macdonald considering the structure of services in its review of needs, resources and communication;

- (ii) that the increasing cost of periodicals was outrageous and that subscription to electronic journals should be encouraged;
- (iii) that while there was a commitment to provide a first-class and efficient inter-library loan service, the working group would need to consider how this should be resourced;
- (iv) that the review of needs would cover those for teaching (both undergraduate and postgraduate) and research;
- (v) that the concerns of the School of Law in regard to their book fund allocation should be clarified as a matter of urgency;
- (vi) that DISS staff were keen to assist Departments with their strategic planning in regard to library acquisitions;
- (vii) that while the University expected a much-improved performance in the forthcoming Research Assessment Exercise, it was extremely difficult to predict what the outcome would be in terms of additional resource allocation;
- (viii) that spending on Discretionary Accounts in excess of the year's income was permissible, subject to budgets set up with the Dean's approval. Since it was clear that this position was not known to all academic staff, Deans were asked to ensure that their staff were aware of their Faculty's Discretionary Account procedures.

323.8 In closing the discussion, the Principal emphasised that both he and Professor Macdonald would welcome feedback from staff on any of the above issues if there were any further concerns.

NEW ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATIONS 2000: INTERIM REPORT

324.1 The Principal invited Professor Macdonald to introduce the Interim Report on new admissions and registrations which had been received by the Senate.

324.2 Professor Macdonald indicated that additional registrations had been confirmed since the Report had been circulated to the Senate and that the final UK/EU undergraduate intake should be approximately 125 over target compared with last year's shortfall of 110. This excellent position was a consequence of a more professional approach to student recruitment and to the extraordinary effort throughout the year, and particularly during the Summer, of the staff of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service and Admissions Selectors in developing and implementing new initiatives. A Clearing/Late Applications Group had been established in May, under the Convenership of Professor Houlihan, and all staff concerned were to be congratulated for their enthusiasm, commitment and professionalism in ensuring that the undergraduate intake exceeded the target.

324.3 In spite of this excellent performance, the total undergraduate population was likely to be slightly lower than last year. It was essential, therefore, that the efforts put in place during 2000 should be repeated to ensure that the overall admissions target was achieved, or exceeded, each year.

- 324.4 The anticipated fall in postgraduate taught numbers was a consequence of reduced European Social Fund (ESF) grants. However, the position should become more favourable if the University's application for ESF funding was successful: a decision was anticipated in December and it was hoped that a cohort of new postgraduate taught students would register at the start of the second half-session.
- 324.5 The number of new research students registered to date had exceeded those admitted at the same time last year, although the overall number of registered research students was likely to decrease.
- 324.6 While it was clear that Departments must continue to be heavily involved in postgraduate recruitment, it was nonetheless essential that consideration be given to adopting some of the initiatives implemented for undergraduate recruitment in order to reduce fragmentation at postgraduate level with a view to increasing recruitment.
- 324.7 Professor Macdonald reported that the issue of non-progression had been highlighted recently in the publication of performance indicators in *The Times*. The University's predicted dropout rate was less than that predicted in the previous year but was clearly a substantial cause for concern. It was important that the methodology used in determining the indicators was analysed, and the University Committee on Teaching and Learning had been charged with investigating student retention and to bring forward recommendations.
- 324.8 Professor Macdonald invited questions and general comments, whose principal points of record were as follows:-
- (i) that the role of the Adviser was to be reviewed, partly as a consequence of the impact on the advising system of exceeding this year's undergraduate admissions target;
 - (ii) that it was important to be able to undertake cohort analysis year-on-year and to monitor the progress of individual students.

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Amerada Hess Prizes

325. The Senate, for its part, approved a recommendation from the Convener of the Undergraduate Programme Committee (Arts & Social Sciences) that the undernoted regulations be approved for award of two new prizes in Management Studies:

AMERADA HESS PRIZES: Arts & Social Sciences: £300 and £200

Established in 2000 by contribution from Amerada Hess. Funding has been made available for two awards each year for students who have successfully completed the Level 3 course in Organisational Change (MS3510). The first prize, of £300, will be awarded to the student who in the opinion of the course co-ordinator has achieved the highest overall performance in the course. The second prize, of £200, shall be awarded to the student placed second in the ranking of overall performance. Initial funding for the prize has been provided for a three-year period: continuation of the prize will be reviewed in 2002.

EUROPEAN POLICY STATEMENT

326. The Senate approved the University's European Policy Statement which would form part of the application for SOCRATES/ERASMUS funding for 2001/02.

LATEST DATE FOR THE RETURN OF EXAMINATION RESULTS 2000-2001

327. The Senate approved the latest dates for the return of examination results in the session 2000-2001 as under:-
- (a) January 2001 Diet of Examinations
 - (i) Level 1 and 2 courses by Friday 9 February 2001
 - (ii) Levels 3, 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses by Friday 16 February 2001
 - (iii) Postgraduate taught courses by Friday 23 February 2001
 - (b) May/June 2001 Diet of Examinations
 - (i) MBChB and BSc Med Sci courses (years 2 or above) by the last date of the relevant Summer Term (i.e. Friday 22 June 2001 or 29 June 2001, as appropriate)
 - (ii) All other Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses and undergraduate programmes by Friday 15 June 2001
 - (iii) Postgraduate taught course and programme results for those candidates completing all the requirements of their programme and hoping to graduate in July 2001, by Friday 15 June 2001
 - (iv) All other postgraduate taught courses by Friday 22 June 2001
 - (c) August 2001 Diet of Examinations
 - (i) Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses by Wednesday 29 August 2001
 - (ii) Postgraduate taught courses and programmes by Friday 19 October 2001

DEADLINE FOR REFUSAL OF CLASS CERTIFICATES

328. The Senate approved a recommendation that the deadlines for the notification to the Senate Office of the refusal of Class Certificates be as follows:-

First half-session courses: 5.00 p.m. on 18 December 2000 i.e. on the Monday following the last day of teaching

Second half-session courses: 5.00 p.m. on 15 May 2001 i.e. on the Tuesday following the last day of teaching

DATES OF TERMS

329. The Senate approved the Dates of Terms for 2001-2002 and provisionally those for the sessions to 2010-2011.

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

330. The Senate approved the following:-

(i) the appointment of Senate members to University Committees, on the recommendation of the relevant Deans, with immediate effect, as indicated below:-

Honorary Degrees Committee	:	Professor Gilbert <i>vice</i> Professor Russell
Senate Postgraduate Academic Appeals Committee	:	Professor Torrance <i>vice</i> Professor Fergusson
Academic Standards Committee (Arts & Social Sciences, Divinity and Law)	:	Dr PV Schlicke (until 30.09.03) <i>vice</i> Dr RAV Cox

(ii) a recommendation from the Students' Association (SA) that the President of the SA be permitted to nominate an alternate to serve on the University Committee on Teaching and Learning in his stead for all meetings in 2000/01.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT

The Senate noted the actions taken by the University Court at its meetings of 27 June and 26 September 2000, as under:

1. Resolution No 223 of 2000
[Fifth Amendment to Schedule A to UC Ordinance No 111
(Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus)]

331. The Senate noted that the Court had passed the above Resolution.

2. Resolution No 224 of 2000
[Changes in General Regulations for First Degrees and
Taught Postgraduate Awards]

332. The Senate noted that the Court had passed the above Resolution.

3. Strategic Plan 2000-04

333.1 The Senate noted that the Court had approved the University's Strategic Plan for 2000-04, with related Financial Forecasts and Student Number Projections and the Estate Management Action Plan, subject to minor amendment in the light of points raised about the University's position with regard to the Institute for Learning & Teaching, the University's international outlook, while remaining rooted in the North East community, the competitive advantage bestowed on the University by its natural environment, and the contribution of the Medical School to health.

333.2 The approved planning documentation had been submitted to the Funding Council.

4. Review of Committees

334. The Senate noted that the Court:

(i) had given further consideration to the suggestions for review of the committee structure first considered at its previous meeting and to the comments which had been received on the suggestions following consultation throughout the University.

(ii) had approved the recommendation for the composition and remit of a new Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee, formed by the merger of the Joint Planning & Resource Committee and the Finance & Estates Committee.

(iii) had approved the proposed composition and remit of the new Student Affairs Committee, formed by the merger of the former Welfare and Academic Services Consultative Committee and the Student Organisations Committee, including the recommendation that the President of the Debater, the President of the Charities Campaign and the Convener of the Sub-Committee on Disabilities be added to the list of those in attendance at meetings of the Student Affairs Committee and that the Convenership of the Committee need not be held by the same lay member who convened the Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee.

(iv) had approved the proposed composition and remit of the new Staffing and Development Committee, formed by the merger of the former Staff Grading and Appraisal Committee and the Personnel Policy and Staff Development and Appraisal Committee, subject to the addition to the composition of a member representative of non-academic staff and to modification of the remit to clarify the distinction between the Committee's role and that of the Remuneration Committee with regard to Professorial and Grade 6 staff.

(v) had agreed that the original suggestion for the review of the composition and remit of the Chapel Committee, along with the comments received on it, be referred for further consultation with a view to a recommendation to the Senate, and ultimately return to the Court.

(vi) had approved the abolition of the Continuing Education Policy Committee.

5. Court Representation on joint Court-Senate Committees

335. The Senate noted that the Court had approved recommendations from the Nominating Committee regarding Court representation on joint Court-Senate Committees, as under:

(i) Joint Planning, Finance & Estates Committee

Mr A Mair (Convener), Dr H Fullerton, Mr A Salvesen, Mr G Stevenson.

(ii) Museums Collections & Galleries

Principal, Mr J Leiper (alternate), Professor Houlihan, Professor Logan, Dr A Dawson, Mrs A Skene.

(iii) Staffing & Development Committee

Dr M Mackie, Dr A Dawson, Professor AR Forrester, Professor Torrance, Deans.

(iv) Student Affairs Committee

Dr N Milne (Convener), Mr D Cockburn, Mrs A Skene.

(v) Student Recruitment & Admissions

Professor IR Macdonald, Professor Torrance, Miss A Harper, Miss M Main.

(vi) University Committee on Teaching & Learning

Dr JG Roberts, Dr J Farrington, Mr J Leiper, Dr J Simpson.

(vii) Chapel Committee

Under review: Minute 334 above refers.

6. Tuition Fees: Diploma in Legal Practice

336. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the increased level of the home fee at £3,500 for 2000-2001.

7. Disability Statement

337. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the Disability Statement 2000/03.

8. Information Strategy

338. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the institutional Information Strategy.

9. Conditions for Using Information Technology Facilities

339. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the Conditions for Using Information Technology Facilities.

10. Museum Regulations

340. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the Museum Regulations.

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES

New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes

341. The Senate noted that the Academic Standards Committees, on the recommendations of the relevant Faculties, had approved changes to the list of courses and programmes available as indicated in Appendix II [copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes].

ELECTION OF SENATE ASSESSOR TO THE JOINT PLANNING, FINANCE AND ESTATES COMMITTEE

342. The Senate noted that Professor IR Torrance had been elected as a Senate Assessor to the Joint Planning, Finance and Estates Committee, for the duration of his assessorship to the University Court.

SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

343. The Senate noted the University's response to the Quality Assurance Agency's position paper on a national framework for qualifications in Scotland, and a summary of the position paper, which incorporated a commentary on the implications for the University.

AWARD OF ENDOWED PRIZES AND MEDALS 1999-2000

344. The Senate noted the List of the Award of University Prizes and Medals for the session 1999-2000 [Appendix III: copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes].

UNIVERSITY STATISTICAL REPORT 1999-2000

345. The Senate noted that the University Statistical Report for 1999-2000 was now available and could be obtained from the Senate Office (extension 2039). Any member who wished to raise a matter on the Report for discussion at the next meeting of the Senate was asked to submit it in writing to the Academic Registrar by 5.00 p.m. on Monday 13 November 2000.

NOVEMBER GRADUATION CEREMONIES

346. The Senate noted the following:-
- (i) that the Honorary Degree of Master of the University would be conferred on Mr Jack Webster at a ceremony in the Mitchell Hall on Friday 24 November 2000 at 3.00 p.m. Dr I Russell would promote Mr Webster. The Principal would deliver the Graduation Address.
 - (ii) that the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters would be conferred on Ms Lucia Etxebarria at a ceremony in the Mitchell Hall on Saturday 25 November 2000 at 11.00 a.m. Professor Swanson would promote Ms Etxebarria. Professor Logan would deliver the Graduation Address.

GRADUATIONS *IN ABSENTIA*

- 347.1 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 2001].
- 347.2 The Senate conferred the degrees on, and awarded the diplomas and other qualifications to, the persons stated.

New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes

Celtic

Introduction of new Level 3 courses 'Gaelic History & Institutions 1560-1760', 'Gaelic History & Institutions 1706 to the Present' (replacing CE3512).

Chemistry

Introduction of new Level 1 course 'Essentials of Chemistry'.

Computing Science

Introduction of new Level 4 course 'Digital Libraries'.

Cultural History

Introduction of modified Level 3 course 'Approaches to Culture' (replacing CU3005).

Introduction of new Level 3 course 'The Ethnology of Tradition'.

Withdrawal of the course CU4006.

English

Introduction of new Level 1 course: 'Essentials of Language' (replacing EL1301 and 1506).

Introduction of new Level 4 course: 'Auden in the 1930s: Landscape, Violence and Desire'.

Introduction of new Level 5 course: 'Novel and Nation: Ireland and Scotland'.

Hispanic Studies

Withdrawal of the courses SP1011, 1511, 1512, 2012, 2512, 3047, 3054, 3061, 3541, 3546 and 3559.

Introduction of new Level 3 courses 'Latin American Cinema', 'Politics and the Writer in Latin America'.

History

Introduction of new Level 1 courses 'Vikings, Gaels and Normans, c.800-1200', 'Europe in the 20th Century'.

Introduction of new Level 2 course 'Roads to Integration: The European Construction Process in a Historical Perspective' (replacing HI2007).

History & Philosophy of Science

Introduction of modified Level 2 courses 'History and Philosophy of Science I', 'History and Philosophy of Science II' (replacing HS2001 and 2501).

Change in title of HS3001.

Land Economy

Introduction of new Level 4 course 'Contemporary Debates in Planning and Development (replacing LE 4017).

Law

Withdrawal of the LLM programme 'Environmental Law', the options formerly available in that programme to be available within the 'Property Law' programme, which was now to be introduced in 2000/01 rather than 2001/02.

Management Studies

Introduction of new Level 3 course 'Knowledge Management'.

Mathematical Sciences

Withdrawal of the course MX3514.

Medicine and Therapeutics

Withdrawal of the MSc programme 'International Nutrition'.

Politics & International Relations

Introduction of new Level 3 courses 'Concepts in Political Science' (replacing PI3028), 'Approaches in Political Science' (replacing PI3528).

Psychology

Modified courses at Levels 1, 2 and 3, replacing PS1001, 1501, 2003, 2004, 2503, 2504, 3004 and 3509.

Surgery (Radiology)

Introduction of a Postgraduate Diploma option for the Master of Radiology programme.

Zoology

Withdrawal of the course ZO4521.

Degree of BSc

Introduction of new Designated and Honours programmes 'Wildlife Management'.