

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 1999

Present: Principal, Professors Macdonald, Sloane, Logan, Houlihan, AR Forrester, Catto, Hubbuck, Miller, Thomson, Sleeman, Urwin, Bruce, Baker, Britton, Jolliffe, Meek, Racey, Jordan, Fraser, Graham, Lomax, Alexander, Simpson, Dawson, Pope, Freeston, FB Watson, Ingold, Harrison, Ingram, Archbold, Adams, Logie, Mather, Blaikie, Duff, Salmon and Torrance, Dr D Mannings, Ms L Foley, Mrs FM Alexander, Dr AR Anderson, Dr JB Craig, Dr J Dunkley, Dr D Heddle, Dr CT Imrie, Dr AM Kiger, Dr PR Kinnear, Dr WF Long, Dr PFA MacConnell, Mr AW McLean, Dr MR Masson, Dr DA Nunez, Dr JA Petty, Dr PVW Schlicke, Dr J Sheehan, Dr JDF Skatun, Dr SP Townsend, Dr ER van Teijlingen, Dr A Venneri, Mr A Cole-Hamilton, Mr R McGregor, Mr G Couper, Ms S Arrowsmith, Ms C Murray and Ms K Finan with Dr H Hotson in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Dr JG Roberts, Professors Cameron, Mordue, Johnstone, Walker, Templeton, Seaton, Fergusson, Russell, Helms, Hendry, Forte, Ritchie, Buckland, Sharp, Gane, Rees, Hukins, Killham, Bryden, Gilbert, Rodger, Dr JGA Burgess, Dr CD McCaig, Dr LH Chappell, Dr H Galley, Dr G Hesketh, Dr S Lawrie, Dr JM Liversidge, Mrs ML Ross, Dr HM Wallace and Dr J Watson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

163. The minutes of the meeting of 16 June 1999 and of the *In Absentia* and In Person Graduation Ceremonies, held between 3 and 14 July 1999, were approved.

INDUCTION OF PROFESSORS

Professor MW Freeston : Chair of Medical Informatics

- 164.1 The Senate noted that the Court had appointed Professor Michael W Freeston, BSc, MSc, PhD, Research Associate, Alexandria Digital Library Project, University of California, to the Chair of Medical Informatics with effect from 1 September 1998.
- 164.2 Professor Freeston was welcomed by the Principal on behalf of the Senate, and signed the Membership Roll.

Professor FB Watson : Chair of New Testament Exegesis

- 165.1 The Senate noted that the Court had appointed Professor Francis B Watson, DPhil, Reader in Biblical Theology, King's College London, to the Chair of New Testament Exegesis with effect from 1 October 1999.
- 165.2 Professor Watson was welcomed by the Principal on behalf of the Senate, and signed the Membership Roll.

Professor T Ingold : Chair of Social Anthropology

- 166.1 The Senate noted that the Court had appointed Professor Timothy Ingold, PhD, Max Gluckman Chair of Social Anthropology, University of Manchester, to the Chair of Social Anthropology with effect from 1 September 1999.
- 166.2 Professor Ingold was welcomed by the Principal on behalf of the Senate, and signed the Membership Roll.

Professor RT Harrison : Chair of Management Studies

- 167.1 The Senate noted that the Court had appointed Professor Richard T Harrison, BA, PhD, Professor of Strategy and Organisational Development, University of Ulster, to the Chair of Management Studies with effect from 1 July 1999.
- 167.2 Professor Harrison was welcomed by the Principal on behalf of the Senate, and signed the Membership Roll.

STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL

Improved Accessibility to University Buildings and Facilities

168. The Principal drew attention to the on-going programme of major building works on campus as part of the University's commitment to provide improved physical access for students, staff and visitors. It had now incorporated the most ancient part of the campus, including the Chapel, the Conference and Visitor Centre and the Elphinstone Hall, and would continue over the next few years.

Admissions

- 169.1 The Principal reported that the University had been successful in achieving its full-time UK/EU undergraduate admissions targets in Medicine, Law, Land Economy/Marine Resource Management and Engineering, but that, generally, the overall position was much less favourable. He invited the Senior Vice-Principal to provide further details.
- 169.2 Professor Macdonald reported that the University, for the second consecutive year, had failed to achieve its overall undergraduate full-time UK/EU admissions target, with under-recruitment in Divinity and Health Sciences and to the degrees of MA and BSc. On a more optimistic note, he reported that overseas undergraduate student numbers had exceeded target slightly, with the number of overseas research students admitted remaining approximately the same as in the previous year. UK/EU postgraduate research admissions were less than at the same stage last year, and postgraduate taught numbers also had declined.
- 169.3 He drew particular attention to those areas which had achieved their undergraduate UK/EU targets. This could be partly attributed to departmental involvement with Student Recruitment Services in developing appropriate recruitment strategies. He urged all sectors of the University to collaborate as much as possible with Student Recruitment Services. The Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee would be considering the more effective targeting of recruitment activity and a report would be submitted to the Senate in due course.

QSP Financial Systems

- 170.1 The Principal acknowledged that all sectors of the University were experiencing difficulties in using the new financial system, QSP, and said that significant effort was being applied to resolve the problems. He encouraged staff not only to telephone the Help Desk for advice but also to bring to the attention of the University Secretary or the Convener of the Project Board details of their concerns. He invited the University Secretary to outline the remedial action being taken to resolve the problems.
- 170.2 Mr Cannon indicated that the University was seeking aggressively to address the problems. He was meeting weekly with the Project Board to discuss progress and the way forward, and would write to Heads of Department following each of these meetings to ensure that they were kept up-to-date on progress. Once the immediate issues were resolved, the University would review QSP's functionality and business processes.

Research Centres

- 171.1 The Principal indicated that the University had been extraordinarily successful recently in recruitment at professorial level and he was deeply conscious of the good work being undertaken throughout the University. However, he believed that far-reaching change in the nature of higher education was imminent and that institutions would be identified either as predominantly research-led or as providers of teaching. His aim was to ensure that this University was a research-led institution, but to achieve this aim it must improve its current standing. He had therefore discussed with the Senior Management Group (SMG) how best to achieve this. The SMG had proposed the establishment of Research Centres to support those colleagues whose research was acknowledged to be of the highest international quality. He then invited Professor Catto, Vice-Principal with responsibilities for Research, to give further details of the proposals.
- 171.2 Professor Catto expressed his thanks to those staff who had taken the time and effort to respond to his recent consultation letter. He acknowledged that the concept of a critical mass of colleagues working together as a pre-requisite for maintaining or achieving excellence in research would not be applicable in all areas and he emphasised that the proposal to establish Research Centres would not affect the various other arrangements for new staff, pump-priming or other forms of research support. The proposal would not jeopardise smaller groupings or individual researchers of international quality. He considered the Research Centre model to be just one aspect of the University's strategy for achieving excellence in research, and invited comments on other strategies to achieve this goal. Proposals for Research Centres would be assessed in a similar manner to that adopted by Research Councils, i.e. by external peer review.
- 171.3 The Principal then invited general comment. A wide-ranging debate ensued, whose principal points of record were as follows:-
- (i) Concern was expressed that SHEFC resource would be channelled towards the new Research Centres to the detriment of individual researchers.

In response, Professor Catto emphasised that the Centres would be resourced from the University's current Strategic Reserve Fund and reassured members that the proposals would not have a detrimental effect on those staff not involved in Centres, for whom the existing funding mechanisms would still be available. The vast majority of research funding would be distributed by Faculties in the current manner.

- (ii) The following concerns were expressed: the relative lack of information on the Research Centre proposal and of possible alternative models; the impact on existing departmental structures; the method of utilising external peer review to select those proposals to be funded as Research Centres given the likely very disparate nature of proposals; and the view that research income should not be seen as the sole determinant in assessing proposals.

In response, Professor Catto stated that the creation of Research Centres was just one component of the University's overall strategy and that their progress would be subject to rigorous audit. He anticipated that some staff would become physically closer together to form Research Centres, with others forming equally successful Centres from within existing departmental structures.

- (iii) There was a perception that research of international quality undertaken by small groupings or individuals would not be able to attract the required level of resource from the University if they did not aggregate to form the critical mass which was perceived as being required for the establishment of a Centre.

Professor Catto's view was that the University could not become an internationally-renowned research-led institution by retaining the status quo in resource allocation. No other university of the type to which we aspired allocated research funding in a similar way. Research-intensive universities would be those which responded to changed priorities in the allocation of Research Council funding and which established strong research groupings to complement strong individual researchers.

- (iv) The Research Centre concept was seen by some members as exciting and stimulating. It would support able staff, promote research and lead to increased possibilities of securing external funding which was a key to increasing levels of excellent research activity.

171.4 In closing the debate, the Principal confirmed that applications for Centres could still be submitted after 30 October 1999. The success of Centres would be dependent on individuals' commitment. Some staff might well decide to wait to see how the strategy developed. Proposals would be judged solely on their individual merits.

UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

172.1 The Principal invited the University Secretary to summarise the changes which he had put in place for providing an improved administrative service to the University. These included the following: the University Secretariat splitting into its component parts; the Undergraduate Admissions Office becoming part of Student Recruitment Services to form an integrated recruitment and admissions service; the establishment of a European Affairs Office; the integration of the Careers Service with other student support services; the remaining elements of the Academic Section forming a revised Registry; and the University's Estates, Residences and Physical Education activities being merged as a Facilities Management Directorate.

- 172.2 The leaflet which had been sent to Senators had been designed predominantly for staff within the administration and provided a useful background to explain the changes to academic staff. The report of an external review of the University's administration in 1998 had informed the University Secretary's own review of administrative structures. The new organisation was built on three underlying principles: that authority be devolved to the closest operational level capable of delivering a first class service to accepted and agreed standards; that unnecessary layers of management were removed; that services were arranged into functional groupings and around clear, service-orientated, objectives. The administration would produce its own strategic development plan, which would be matched by operational plans at section level and by individual work plans. Performance at all levels would be measured and monitored.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT

Draft Resolution No of 1999 [Chairs of Computing Science - Amendment of Title]

- 173.1 The Senate noted that, at its meeting on 29 June 1999, the Court had decided to forward the draft Resolution [Chairs of Computing Science - Amendment to Title] to the Senate and the General Council and to make it generally available in terms of Section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966.
- 173.2 The Senate, for its part, approved Draft Resolution No of 1999 [Chairs of Computing Science - Amendment of Title].

Library Committee Draft Resolution No of 1999 [Repeal of Ordinance No 307 (Aberdeen No 82)]

- 174.1 The Senate noted: (i) that the Court, for its part, had approved a recommendation that the Library Committee, a joint committee of the Court and the Senate, be abolished because it had fallen into disuse;
- (ii) that the Court had decided to forward the draft Resolution [Repeal of Ordinance No 307 (Aberdeen No 82)] to the Senate and the General Council and to make it generally available in terms of Section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966;
- (iii) that the Court had also decided to forward for the information of the Senate the background paper prepared for the Court.
- (iv) that the background paper recommended inadvertently that any residual functions of the Library Committee be assumed *inter alia* by the Library Users' Committee rather than by the Information Management Committee on the recommendation of the Library Users' Committee (Recommendation 2.1 of the Court paper refers).
- 174.2 The Senate, for its part, approved Draft Resolution No of 1999 [Repeal of Ordinance No 407 (Aberdeen No 82)].

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Academic Postgraduate Officers

- 175.1 The Senate approved recommendations from the relevant Deans, following consultation, for the appointment of the undernoted to act as academic postgraduate officers with effect from 1 September 1999 in the Areas of Study stated, as under:

Science

Dr T Stuchbury *vice* Dr H Galbraith

Divinity

Professor FB Watson *vice* Dr B Rosner
Dr CR Trueman *vice* Professor Marshall

Law

Mrs M Ross *vice* Ms C Kimber.

- 175.2 The Senate also approved the nomination of Professor FB Watson to serve as a member of the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate).

Northern European Historical Research Network

- 176.1 The Senate approved in principle a recommendation from the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate) that the University become a partner institution of the Northern European Historical Research Network, enabling doctoral students in the Department of History who were accepted as candidates and complied with the supplementary requirements specified by the Network to obtain concurrently with the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of this University, the Degree 'Doctor Communitatis Europae (DCE) in Northern European History'.
- 176.2 It was noted that, as in the case of the conjoint degrees of MBChB, currently awarded by the University, and the Common European Doctorate, already recognised by the Conference of European Union Rectors' Conferences, the DCE would be conferrable only with the PhD, and not independently of it. Students wishing to enrol for the PhD, DCE would require to be accepted (normally after one year of PhD registration) by a Doctoral Committee comprising representatives of the partner institutions, of which there were currently 16. They would also be required to report to that Committee once each year.
- 176.3 Students for the PhD, DCE would be required to undertake research with a European dimension and within the thematic area of the Network ('to define and redefine identities in the North Sea and Baltic Worlds in relation to land, sea and people throughout history'). They would also be required to spend normally not less than 12 months studying in at least two other partner institutions of the Network and to submit a thesis on a topic which had required such study elsewhere.

- 176.4 To obtain the Degrees of PhD, DCE students would be required to satisfy all normal requirements of the Aberdeen PhD. Additionally, there would have to be at least one examiner from another institution within the Network, as well as an examiner from outside the Network. Part of the oral examination would also have to be conducted in a language other than English. Students not meeting the supplementary requirements for award of the DCE could still be awarded this University's PhD, if otherwise qualified in accordance with this University's Regulations.
- 176.5 The Postgraduate Officers in Arts & Social Sciences would be responsible for ensuring that the requirements were met of both Aberdeen University and Northern European Historical Research Network regulations as regards admission, supervision, progress and the process of examination.
- 176.6 The DCE adopted the form, and met all the conditions of the European Doctorate already recognised by the Conference of European Union Rectors' Conferences, of which the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom was a member.

LATEST DATE FOR THE RETURN OF EXAMINATION RESULTS 1999-2000

177. The Senate approved the latest dates for the return of examination results in the academic year 1999-2000, as under:
- (a) January 2000 Diet of Examinations
- (i) Level 1 and 2 courses by Friday 11 February 2000
- (ii) Level 3 and 4, and undergraduate Level 5, courses by Friday 18 February 2000
- (iii) Postgraduate Level 5 courses by Friday 25 February 2000
- (b) May/June 2000 Diet of Examinations
- (i) MBChB and BSc Med Sci courses (years 2 and above) by the last date of the relevant Summer Term (i.e. Friday 23 June 2000, 30 June 2000, or 7 July 2000, as appropriate)
- (ii) All other Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses and undergraduate programmes by Friday 16 June 2000
- (iii) Postgraduate Level 5 courses by Friday 23 June 2000
- (c) August 2000 Diet of Examinations
- (i) Level 1 to 4, and undergraduate Level 5, courses by Wednesday 30 August 2000
- (ii) Postgraduate Level 5 courses and taught postgraduate programmes by Friday 20 October 2000 including details of those candidates granted extensions to the period for submission of their dissertations beyond the end of their registered period of study (Minute 146 of 16 June 1999 refers).

DEADLINE FOR REFUSAL OF CLASS CERTIFICATES

178. The Senate approved a recommendation that the deadline for the notification to the University Registry of the refusal of Class Certificates in respect of first half-session courses be 5.00 p.m. on the Friday of the last teaching week of the first half-session, i.e. 17 December 1999.

DATES OF TERMS

179. The Senate approved the Dates of Terms for 2000-2001 and, provisionally, those for the academic years to 2009-10.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT

The Senate noted the actions taken by the Court at its meetings on 29 June and 28 September 1999, as under:

Strategic Plan 1999-2003

180. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the Strategic Plan 1999-2003 and the Estates Management Action Plan for forwarding to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council.

Proposed merger with Northern College

181. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the document for the proposed merger with Northern College for forwarding to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and to the Scottish Executive.

Unfair dismissal waiver clause

182. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the recommendation that the unfair dismissal waiver clause in fixed term contracts of employment be abandoned with effect from 1 August 1999.

Court membership of joint Court-Senate Committees

183. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the recommendations from the Nominating Committee regarding Court membership of joint Court-Senate Committees, as under:
- (a) Chapel Committee: Mr Michie to be appointed to fill the current vacancy.
 - (b) Continuing Education Policy Committee: Mr Michie to be appointed in place of Mr Mair.
 - (c) Joint Policy and Resource Committee: Mrs Skene to be appointed in place of Mr Salvesen.
 - (d) Personnel Policy and Staff Development & Appraisal Committee: Professor AR Forrester to be appointed in place of Dr McQuillan.
 - (e) Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee: Professor Torrance to be appointed in place of Dr McQuillan.
 - (f) Welfare and Academic Services Consultative Committee: Ms Dromgoole to be appointed to fill the existing vacancy.

Vice-Principals

184. The Senate noted that the Court had approved the recommendations that the following be appointed Vice-Principals for the period of their Deanships, namely 1 August 1999 to 31 July 2002:

Professor PJ Sloane, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences & Law;
Dr JG Roberts, Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Divinity.

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Senate noted the actions taken by the Academic Standards Committees since they last met, as under:

New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes

185. The Senate noted that the Committees, on the recommendations of the relevant Faculties, had approved changes to the list of courses and programmes available as under (the list excluded courses which had been re-numbered solely because of a change in credit value, or teaching or assessment arrangements):-

Celtic

New course at level 3 in Scottish Gaelic: Written 3

Divinity with Religious Studies

Withdrawal of the level 1 courses in Greek Language (Classical) 1 and 2 (DR1017 and 1517)

New course at levels 3 and 5 'Social Anthropology of Religion'

New course at level 3 'Islam Observed' (replacing DR3512)

Re-introduction, for 1999-2000 only, of the course DR3035

Withdrawal of the level 3 course DR3033

Geology

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Advanced Techniques in Sedimentary Basins'

Hispanic Studies

Introduction of new level 1 course: 'Catalan History and Culture'

Introduction of new level 2 courses: 'Advanced Spanish 1A', 'Advanced Catalan 1', 'Advanced Catalan 2'

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'Basque Culture: Memory and Modernity', 'Catalan Culture and Language I', 'The Body Politic in Southern Cone Narrative', 'Catalan Culture and Language II'

History

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Scotland and India: 1695-1800'

Land Economy

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Research Methods' (existing LE4015 to be withdrawn after 1999-2000)

Management Studies

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'Small Business and Enterprise Creation' (replacing MS3012, 3312, 3512, 3812), 'Information Technology and Management' (replacing MS 3005 and 3006), 'Innovation and Entrepreneurship'

Withdrawal of level 5 course 'Decision Making in Educational Management'

Nursing Studies

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Advanced Professional Practice', 'Remembering the Person: Exploring Health Care from the Perspective of the Arts and Humanities', 'Understanding Substance Misuse: Individual and Society', 'Using Evidence in Practice', 'Research Methods in Nursing and Midwifery', 'Ethics in Practice', 'Dissertation in Nursing', 'Dissertation in Midwifery'

Politics and International Relations

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'Scottish Politics', 'Marxism in the Twentieth Century'

Sociology

Introduction of new level 4 courses: 'Global Change and Modern Life', 'Nations and Nationalism'

Soil Science

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Soil Physical Environment' (replacing SS3003)

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Impact Assessment and Remediation of Contaminated Environments'

Withdrawal of courses SS3302, SS3804 and SS4802

Tropical Biology

Introduction of new level 3 course 'Soil Biology and Fertility in Tropical and Temperate Environments' (replacing TB 3802)

Degree of MA with Honours

Introduction of new programmes in Celtic with Language and Linguistics, Celtic Civilisation-Hispanic Studies, Divinity with Language and Linguistics, English with Language and Linguistics, French with Language and Linguistics, German with Language and Linguistics, Hispanic Studies with Language and Linguistics, History with Language and Linguistics, History of Art with Language and Linguistics, Religious Studies with Language and Linguistics, Sociology with Women's Studies

Designated Degree of MA

Introduction of new programme in Women's Studies

Degree of BSc in Pure Science with Honours

Withdrawal of programmes in Geography with Plant Science, Geography with Soil Science

Designated Degree of BSc in Pure Science

Introduction of new programmes in Mathematics-Zoology, Organic Agriculture

AWARD OF ENDOWED PRIZES AND MEDALS 1998-99

186. The Senate noted the List of the Award of University Prizes and Medals for the session 1998-99.

STATISTICAL REPORT 1998-99

- 187.1 The Senate noted that the Aberdeen Statistical Report for 1998-99 was now available. Members who wished to receive a copy should contact the Senate Office.
- 187.2 There would be an opportunity for members to raise any matters on the Report for discussion at the next regular meeting of the Senate.

NOVEMBER GRADUATION CEREMONIES

188. The Senate noted:
- (i) that the Honorary Degree of Master of the University would be conferred on Mr Charlie Allan at a ceremony in the Mitchell Hall on the afternoon of Friday 26 November 1999. Professor Bruce would promote Mr Allan;
 - (ii) that the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws would be conferred on Lord Marnoch at a ceremony in the Mitchell Hall on the morning of Saturday 27 November 1999. Professor Gane would promote Lord Marnoch;
 - (iii) that the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws would be conferred on Mrs Mary McAleese at a ceremony in King's College Chapel at 12.00 noon on Tuesday 30 November 1999. The Principal would promote Mrs McAleese.

GRADUATIONS *IN ABSENTIA*

- 189.1 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).
- 189.2 The Senate conferred the degrees on, and awarded the diplomas and other qualifications to, the persons stated.

TW/LG
15.10.99

SEN12/minoct99