

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS**Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2000**

Present: Principal, Professors IR Macdonald, AR Forrester, Sloane, Houlihan and Sewel, Dr JG Roberts, Professors Cameron, Johnstone, Thomson, Urwin, Bruce, Sharp, Killham, Bryden, Alexander, Rodger, Ingold, Davidson, Ingram, Swanson, Mather, Saunders, Torrance, Beaumont, Mitchell, Duff, Gow and Salmon, Dr GJA Burgess, Dr MT Dalgarno, Dr N Dower, Dr B Fennell, Dr JRW Hunter, Dr L Foley, Dr AR Akisanya, Dr D Heddle, Dr G Hesketh, Dr CT Imrie, Dr PR Kinnear, Dr S Lawrie, Dr JM Liversidge, Dr DJ Lurie, Dr WD McCausland, Dr PFA MacConnell, Ms DW McKenzie Skene, Mr AWM McLean, Dr D Macphee, Dr MR Masson, Mr LE Moffat, Dr DA Nunez, Dr J Ohlmeyer, Dr LJ Philip, Mrs ML Ross, Dr J Sheehan, Mr SC Styles, Dr SP Townsend, Dr HM Wallace, Mr S Varwell, Mr R McGregor, Ms C Shanley and Mr C Buchanan with Mr M Torrance in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Professors Logan, Mordue, Miller, Templeton, Sleeman, Russell, Baker, Forte, Ritchie, Racey, Buckland, Little, Graham, Gilbert, Flin, Archbold and Reid, Mr WTC Brotherstone, Dr LH Chappell, Dr AW Laing, Dr PVW Schlicke and Dr A Venneri.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

348. The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2000 were approved.

INDUCTION OF PROFESSOR PRKA DAVIDSON TO THE REGIUS**CHALMERS CHAIR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**

349.1 The Senate noted that the Court had appointed Professor Peter RKA Davidson, BA, MA, PhD, Reader in the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick, to the Regius Chalmers Chair of English Literature with effect from 1 September 2000.

349.2 Professor Davidson was welcomed by the Principal on behalf of the Senate, and signed the Membership Roll.

STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL

350.1 The Principal reported on a number of recent events and announcements that were a great credit to the University. These reflected enormously well on the quality of the work being undertaken by staff and demonstrated the effort staff were making to assure the success of the University, as summarised below.

350.2 Remedios, a company based in Aberdeen that utilised technology based on luminescent biosensors developed in the Department of Plant & Soil Science, had been awarded the accolade of Best New Biotechnology Company in 2000 by Scottish Enterprise. This was a remarkable distinction given that the company had only been formally launched in November 1999.

350.3 A recently-published book by Dr David Mannings was receiving outstanding reviews, including being referred to as the Art History publishing event of the year. This was a fitting tribute to a remarkable piece of work.

350.4 The Engineering & Physical Science Research Council had recently confirmed that the University would be awarded a grant of approximately £900,000 to support a MSc programme in e-commerce technologies, to include twentyfive postgraduate taught studentships. This was excellent news, and all staff in the Department of Computing Science who were involved in the development of the project were to be congratulated.

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350.5 At the recent launch of the Sixth Century Campaign in New York, the Principal had announced a recent, anonymous, donation of \$1M towards Phase 2 of the Institute of Medical Sciences. The Funding Council had also recently awarded the University £2.5M towards this project. The University was therefore slightly ahead of its target in securing funding for IMS Phase 2.

350.6 News that the Royal Bank of Scotland had agreed to provide funding of £340,000 towards Access scholarships and bursaries was warmly welcomed by the Senate, as it gave a further boost to the University's efforts to support students.

350.7 In concluding his statement, the Principal reported that the excellent performance in exceeding our undergraduate admissions targets this year had, unfortunately, not been matched at the postgraduate level. Indications were that the University's postgraduate population would decline this year. Deans would therefore be working with Departments to identify strategies for improving recruitment activities, to ensure an increase in postgraduate admissions in the next, and subsequent, academic year.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

(13 October 2000)

1. Annual Report to the Senate

351.1 Dr Roberts introduced the first annual Report from the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL) [Appendix I: copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes]. The Report covered teaching, learning, assessment and quality assurance issues discussed by the UCTL during 1999/2000, and summarised the issues considered by the Academic Standards Committees and the Undergraduate Programme Committees. Data in regard to student progression, academic appeals and academic discipline, and a commentary concerning plagiarism, was also included. The Report concluded with a summary of the issues to be considered by the Committee in the current academic year.

351.2 Dr Roberts expressed his thanks to Professor Macdonald, his predecessor as Convener of the UCTL, who had provided the impetus for the formulation of the University's policies in regard to teaching and learning in recent years. He also expressed his thanks to the Conveners of the Academic Standards Committees and Undergraduate Programme Committees: the work of these committees was summarised in the Report to

the Senate and frequently informed the policies proposed by the UCTL.

351.3 Much of the work of the Committee during the last year had related to the new framework for the external assurance of quality and standards in higher education that was being developed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Internal quality assurance procedures had been revised, and would continue to be reviewed as and when further aspects of the QAA's framework were finalised. Departments were preparing for Subject Review (the successor to Teaching Quality Assessment), and the educational development staff in Human Resources were organising workshops for academic staff on the new arrangements.

351.4 Two of the major areas for consideration by the Committee in the current academic year were student retention and the Advising system: the Committee was establishing Working Groups to take forward these issues.

351.5 Dr Roberts responded to general comments and questions in regard to the Report, whose principal points of record were as follows:-

- i. that the UCTL had not recently discussed the relative merits of membership of the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILT): however, the UCTL would monitor the progress of the Aberdeen University Programme for Higher Education Teachers (AUPHET) Planning Committee in regard to academic staff fulfilling the requirements for membership of the ILT. And the Head of the QAA Scottish Office had confirmed that the question of ILT membership would not be raised by Academic Reviewers as part of Subject Review;
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- ii. that a *Grade Spectrum* for postgraduate taught student progression and awards had been piloted in several Departments last year: the outcome would be evaluated by the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate) this academic year;
 - iii. that issues arising from academic appeals were frequently referred either to Departments, to the relevant Academic Standards Committee or to the UCTL for comment and action, and had resulted in the formal revision of University procedures, where appropriate;
 - iv. that the Student Retention Working Group, which would be convened by Professor Sloane, would consider, *inter alia*, the procedures for student withdrawal: this Group also would review the re-admissions procedures;
 - v. that the UCTL would be reviewing the University's current procedures for academic appeals and academic complaints in light of the QAA's recently-published Code of Practice on these issues, and would report to the Senate in due course: the position whereby members of staff might find themselves the subject of personal remarks arising during an appeal would be considered in the review;
 - vi. that the role of Advisers of Studies would be reviewed by the UCTL Working Group;
 - vii. that since the Academic Standards Committee (Arts & Social Sciences, Divinity and Law) was already reviewing the appropriateness of the Student Course Evaluation Form (SCEF) questions, comments raised at the Senate in regard to the design and scanning of the forms, and the calibration of the data, also would be referred to that Committee, for report to the UCTL in due course.

351.6 In conclusion, the Senate agreed that the Report had been useful in highlighting

teaching and learning issues, and that the UCTL should be asked to submit reports of this nature to the Senate each year.

2. Grade Spectrum

352. The Senate noted that the UCTL had approved proposals from the Department of Engineering for the application of the University's *Grade Spectrum* for determining Honours classification for the degrees of Master of Engineering and Bachelor of Engineering, and that all Departments were now using the *Grade Spectrum*.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT

(31 October 2000)

1. Management and Governance

353. The Senate noted that the Court had received and noted a report from the University Secretary on *Management and Governance*, which referred to progress achieved during the period since the PricewaterhouseCoopers Report in 1998 on the University's administration. The two key recommendations of the PwC report - to *remove the confusion between policy determination and operational delivery*, and to ensure that the *overall organisational structure grouped responsibilities and functions in a coherent and consistent manner* - had been implemented. Action had been taken to refocus administrative effort, introduce team-based working in faculties and to review organisational and committee structures. The most recent management change was the establishment of the University Management Group, chaired by the Principal and including in its membership the Senior Vice-Principal, two Vice-Principals, the University Secretary, the Deans, and senior officers, to take forward the operational management of the University, working within the strategic policy frameworks established by the Court and Senate.

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2. University Committee on Teaching and Learning

354. The Senate noted that the Court had approved its recommendation that the President of the Students' Association be permitted to nominate an alternate to serve in his stead on the University Committee on Teaching and Learning for all meetings in 2000/01.

3. Nominating Committee

355. The Senate noted that Professor S Logan had been appointed by the Senate Assessors to serve on the Nominating Committee for session 2000/01.

REPORT FROM THE JOINT PLANNING, FINANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE

(7 November 2000)

1. Going Rates for Entry in 2002

356.1 The Senate approved the recommendations of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee on Going Rates for Admissions in 2002/03, which had been approved by the Joint Planning, Finance & Estates Committee (JPFEC), for its part, as under:-

- i. that there be no change to the Going Rates for admission to undergraduate degree programmes in Session 2002-2003 for the following Degrees and Licence: BD, BTh, LTh; BLE; BSc Health Sciences; LLB; MA; MBChB; MEng; BEng; BScEng;
- ii. that the Going Rates for admission to the Degrees of BSc Pure Science, BSc For, BSc Agr, BSc Biomedical Sciences and BSc Marine Resource Management in Session 2002-2003 be as follows:-

BSc Pure Science, BSc Forestry, BSc Agriculture

Scottish National Qualifications

4 H at BBCC including H at BC in two Maths/Science subjects.

3 AH at CCD including two Maths/Science subjects.

General Certificate of Education

3 Adv at CDD including two Maths/Science subjects.

4 AS at BBBB including two Maths/Science subjects.

All other qualifications: No change

Advanced entry: No change

BSc Biomedical Sciences

Scottish National Qualifications

4 H at AB BB including Chemistry and one other Maths/Science subject.

3 AH at BBC including Chemistry and one other Maths/Science subject.

General Certificate of Education

3 Adv at BCC including Chemistry and one other Maths/Science subject.

4 AS at AAAB including Chemistry and one other Maths/Science subject.

Irish Leaving Certificate

4 H at AB BB including Chemistry and one other Maths/Science subject.

All other qualifications: No change

Advanced entry: No change

BSc Marine Resource Management

Scottish National Qualifications

4H at BBCC

General Certificate of Education

3 Adv at CCD

All other qualifications: No change

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(iii) that following further discussion with relevant Deans, additional Going Rates be approved by the Convener of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee for the MA with Foundation Studies and the BSc with Foundation Studies, if these programmes are to be put in place for entry in 2002;

(iv) that the Convener of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee be given delegated authority to approve any further amendments which might be required arising from (iii) above.

356.2 In approving the above Going Rates, it was noted that comments raised at the Senate as to the potential disadvantages of changing the Going Rate for the BSc (Pure Science) degree had been taken into consideration by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee before it had recommended that the Going Rate be changed for 2002 entry.

2. Strategic Planning

357. The Senate noted that the JPFEC had approved five strategic aims as a basis for development of the University's Strategic Plan 2001/05 to be submitted to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council in July 2001 and had received an internal schedule for the planning process during 2000/01 [Appendix II: copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes].

REPORT FROM THE CHAPEL COMMITTEE

(17 October 2000)

Proposed Remit and Composition

358.1 The Senate received recommendations from the Chapel Committee for a proposed

new remit and composition for the Committee. [Appendix III: copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes].

358.2 Following discussion, an amendment to the proposed composition was proposed by Mr Varwell and seconded by Mr Buchanan. The proposed amendment was for one person to be appointed "from the Christian Societies affiliated to the Students' Association" instead of one person to be appointed "by the Aberdeen University Christian Union".

358.3 Twenty members voted in favour of the proposed amendment. Twentyfour members voted in favour of the original proposal.

358.4 The Senate therefore approved, for its part, and agreed to refer to the University Court, the recommendations of the Chapel Committee in regard to its proposed new remit and composition, as set out in Appendix III.

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES

New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes

359. 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 [Appendix IV: copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes].

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REPORT FROM THE STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

(26 October 2000)

360. The Senate noted the following, which had been approved by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee:-

(i) an abridged version of the *Report on Admissions to the University: September 2000*.

- i. procedures for the admission of postgraduate students.

ELECTION OF READERS AND LECTURERS TO THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS

361. The Senate noted:-

(i) that the following had been elected as members of the Senatus Academicus with immediate effect until the dates indicated:-

Medicine & Medical Sciences Constituency (full-time)

Dr Elizabeth S Gray until 30 September 2002

Professor Neil AR Gow until 30 September 2004

Dr Alastair Hull until 30 September 2004

Professor David M Reid until 30 September 2004

Dr Heather M Wallace until 30 September 2004

i. that the following vacancies remained for which no nominations had been received in the recent election:-

Arts & Divinity 1 (for 4 years)

Medicine & Medical Sciences (part-time) 3 (2 for 4 years; 1 for 2 years)

Science & Engineering 7 (5 for 4 years; 2 for 2 years)

Social Sciences & Law 3 (1 for 4 years; 2 for 2 years)

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP OF SENATE

362. The Senate noted the following:-

(i) that members of the Students' Association had been elected to serve on the Senate for the academic year 2000-2001, as under:-

President Mr S Varwell

Education & Training Convener Mr R McGregor

Area of Study Conveners:

Arts & Social Sciences Ms C Dalglish

Law Mr J McGachie

Medicine Ms C Lowe

Science Ms C Shanley

Postgraduate Mr C Buchanan

Vice-President (Representation) [in attendance] Mr M Torrance

(ii) that the posts of Area of Study Conveners for Divinity and Engineering had yet to be filled.

GRADUATIONS *IN ABSENTIA*

363.1 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].

363.2 The Senate conferred the degrees on, and awarded the diplomas and other qualifications to, the persons stated.

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APPENDIX IV

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

(15 November 2000)

REPORT FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES

New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes

The Senate is invited to note that the Committees, on the recommendations of the relevant Faculties, have approved changes to the list of courses and programmes available as under (the list does not include courses which have been re-numbered solely because of a change in credit value, or teaching or assessment arrangements). The proposals marked ‘*’ were approved subject to the receipt of satisfactory responses from Departments to queries raised.

Accountancy and Finance

Introduction of new level 5 courses ‘Research in Public Sector Accounting’, ‘Accountancy in the International Context’.

Divinity and Religious Studies

Introduction of new level 3 course ‘Tibetan Buddhism: Ritual, Culture and History in the Himalayas’ *

Withdrawal of the courses DR3026/3558, DR3041 and DR5126.

Engineering

Introduction of new level 4 course in Computer and Software Engineering (replacing EG 4004)

Introduction of modified level 4 courses ‘Civil Engineering Hydraulics’ (replacing EG 4029), ‘Advanced Structural Analysis’ (replacing EG 4021), ‘Environmental Engineering’ (replacing EG 4023), ‘Fluid Dynamics’ (replacing EG 4038), ‘Thermodynamics 2’ (replacing EG 4037), ‘Materials Processing’ (replacing EG 4035), ‘Advanced Control Engineering’ (replacing EG 4041), ‘Electrical Machines and Drives’ (replacing EG 4059), ‘Electrical Power Engineering’ (replacing EG 4058), ‘Signal Processing’ (replacing EG 4068), ‘Optical Engineering’ (replacing EG 4065), ‘Communications Engineering 2’ (replacing EG 4060), ‘Computer Aided Engineering’, ‘Geotechnics A’ (replacing EG 4028), ‘Advanced Structural Design’ (replacing EG 4022).

Introduction of new level 5 course ‘Implementing e-Project Management’.

French

Withdrawal of the course FR3029.

Law

Consolidation into one course of the existing dissertation courses LS5801 to LS5807.

Introduction of new level 5 course ‘Aboriginal Title and Customary Land Tenure System’.

Management Studies

Introduction of level 3 courses 'Information Management and Technology', 'Tools for Decision-Making'. *

Philosophy

Introduction of new level 5 courses 'Advanced Topics in Moral Philosophy 1', 'Advanced Topics in Logic and Metaphysics 1', 'Advanced Topics in Moral Philosophy 2', 'Advanced Topics in Logic and Metaphysics 2'.

Degree of MA

Introduction of new Honours programmes 'Cultural History-Social Research', 'Economic Science-Social Research', 'International Relations with Women's Studies', 'Politics with Women's Studies'.