

**SENATUS ACADEMICUS**

**Notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 March 2005**

Present: Principal, Professors Logan, Houlihan, Dr JG Roberts, Professors Rodger, MacGregor, Hubbuck, Bruce, Sharp, Macinnes, Jordan, Chandler, Flin, Beaumont, Secombes, Mitchell, Ms DW McKenzie Skene, Mrs L Stephen, Professor Archbold, Dr P Benson, Professor Blaikie, Mr WTC Brotherstone, Mr J Chalmers, Dr G Coghill, Professors Duff, Lurie, Salmon, Dr J Geddes, Dr WD McCausland, Dr WG Naphy, Dr LJ Philip, Mrs ML Ross, Dr J Skakle, Mr SC Styles, Dr SP Townsend, Dr HM Wallace, Dr RPK Wells, Mr C Mair with Miss M Wylie.

Apologies: Professors Gane, Haites, Lyall, Forrester, Templeton, Sleeman, Baker, Killham, Alexander, Dawson, Howe, Ayres, Saunders, Clift, Dr WF Long, Miss R Buchan, Ms L Clark, Dr JC Forbes, Dr J Liversidge, Dr P Edwards, Dr J Farmer, Dr D Hay, Dr X Lambin, Dr P Mealor, Dr H Sinclair, Professor Watson, Miss D White and Miss J Niven.

In opening the meeting, the Principal indicated that the meeting was not quorate in view of the relatively low attendance due to the adverse weather. Notes of the meeting, rather than formal Minutes, would therefore be taken. The Principal informed members that he would take Convener's action on behalf of the Senate to approve the various recommendations and that the notes would be formally homologated at the next quorate meeting of the Senate. In regard to the Honorary Degree nominations, the Principal informed members that the voting would go ahead as planned and that he would take Convener's action on behalf of the Senate to approve the nominations without the need for future homologation at a future meeting of the Senate.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

921. The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2005 were approved.

**STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL**

922.1 The Principal indicated that his report would be brief as he had provided a formal written statement to the University community in January and had outlined the key points of this in his statement at the January Senate.

922.2 The Principal highlighted that recruitment of new staff was proceeding well. In regard to student recruitment, reports from the BSc Applicant Day, which was taking place on the day of Senate, had indicated that the event had been most successful.

922.3 The Principal then invited Professor Logan to update members on the progress being made in regard to the budget setting exercise for 2005/06, which had commenced recently.

922.4 Professor Logan reported that Colleges had provided initial updates on their College Strategic Plans and had, in particular, provided a review of their progress in regard to the key areas of the Strategic Plan. He informed members that the annual Funding letter for 2005/06 from SHEFC was expected on 16 March 2005. He reminded members that the grant from SHEFC was composed of 75% Teaching Grant which may be inflation linked. The remainder was drawn from a number of Research Grants, the main one being largely determined by the 2001 RAE outcome and minor volume indicators (including the numbers of postgraduate students and research assistants and amount of research income). Professor Logan indicated that the settlement from SHEFC might be tight with any significant increases being in specific areas rather than a more general overall increase. Professor Logan stated that the letter from the Funding Council would inform the setting of College and School budgets for 2005/06.

**REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SENATE AND ITS SUB-COMMITTEES**

923.1 Mr Cannon presented the background to the proposed review of the effectiveness of the Senate and its sub-committees. The recommendation in the Guide on University Governance that the governing body should keep its effectiveness under regular review was especially timely given the Senate's previous undertaking to review the composition of the Senate in the light of the establishment of Colleges.

923.2 The Senate approved the establishment of a Working Group under the convener'ship of Professor Logan, who informed members that he would welcome comment on the proposals that had been circulated.

- 923.3 During the debate which followed, Professor Logan noted concern in regard to the proposed appointment by Heads of College of members of the Working Group. It was proposed that it would be more democratic if the members were elected by the Senate. It was therefore agreed that the Senate members from each College should elect two Senators from their College to join the Working Group. Professor Logan agreed to take this proposal on board in confirming the composition of the Working Group.
- 923.4 It was proposed that care should be taken to ensure that the review of Senate's sub-committees should avoid being too wide-reaching. In particular, it was felt that the review should focus on the extent to which tasks were devolved to these sub-committees rather than focusing in detail on the actual operation of these sub-committees.
- 923.5 It was further proposed that the review should consider ways to encourage greater debate at Senate. It was proposed that consideration should be given to establishing a Business Committee of the Senate with a primary role in regard to shaping the Senate agenda. It was felt that this would help to ensure a greater ownership of the Senate and make it a more effective strategic body. It was proposed that this group might be composed of staff drawn from senior management together with a number of elected members of the Senate.
- 923.6 Professor Logan thanked Senate for their comments, which would inform the deliberations of the Working Group.

**REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT**  
(8 February 2005)

- 924.1 The Senate, for its part, approved the following Draft Ordinances on the recommendation of the University Court (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*):
- (i) Ordinance of the University Court of the University of Aberdeen No. [Power to extend the University of Aberdeen by affiliating Colleges and other Educational Bodies]
  - (ii) Ordinance of the University Court of the University of Aberdeen No. [Power to incorporate in the University of Aberdeen other Universities, Colleges and other Educational Bodies].
- 924.2 The Senate noted the actions taken by the University Court, as under:

**1. Draft Resoluton No of 2005**  
**[Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees]**

- 924.3 The Court, having received the draft Resolution from the Senate, decided to forward it to the General Council and to make it generally available in terms of Section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966.

**2. Admissions Policy**

- 924.4 The Court, on the recommendation of the Senate, approved the Admissions Policy.

**3. Resolution No 240 of 2004**  
**[Degree of Doctor Honoris Causa (DHC)]**

- 924.5 The Court approved the Resolution, it having been previously considered by Senate and the General Council and made generally available in terms of Section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966.

**REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING**  
(4 February 2005)

**1. Educational Development Sub-Committee**

- 925.1 The Senate noted the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL) had received a report from the Educational Development Sub-Committee. The UCTL had noted that the Sub-Committee would be referring several issues in regard to staff development to the Staffing and Development Committee for further consideration.

## **2. Review of Group Work**

925.2 The Senate noted that the UCTL had received a report summarising the results of a survey of the assessment of group work within the University which had been undertaken in response to an academic appeal which was heard by the Senate Undergraduate Academic Appeals Committee during 2003/2004. Following discussion of the results, the UCTL had agreed to establish a small group to draw up a formal guidance note on the assessment of group work which would be used to help staff wishing to incorporate assessed group work in their teaching.

## **3. Enhancement Themes for 2005-2006 and beyond**

925.3 The Senate noted that the UCTL had considered a paper outlining proposals for a revised approach to quality enhancement themes over the next 5 years. A five year rolling programme of enhancement themes would replace the current year on year arrangement. The UCTL had further noted that the University together with the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, St Andrews and Heriot Watt had proposed that the Research-led Teaching theme should be moved up the agenda. There had been agreement between these institutions that this theme should not be left until the end of the current five-year programme as the current schedule indicated.

## **4. Review of the University's Teaching and Learning strategy**

925.4 The Senate noted that the UCTL had received an update on the work being undertaken as part of the review of the University's teaching and learning strategy. The UCTL had agreed that the reporting schedule should be amended in order that the Interim Report may be considered at the meeting of the UCTL in March 2005, before being forwarded to the Senate in May 2005.

## **5. Review of External Examining**

925.5 The Senate noted that the UCTL had approved the remit and composition of a Working Group to consider the University's procedures for External Examining. This working group had been established to consider *inter alia* the revised Code of Practice on External Examining published in 2004 by the QAA. It was agreed that the Working Group would report to the UCTL in May 2005, with a report being forwarded to the Senate in June 2005.

## **6. Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002**

925.6 The Senate noted that the UCTL had received a Guidance Note from the Scottish Higher Education Practitioners Group on the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, together with a summary of its implications for staff. It was further noted that full sectoral guidance on the implications of FOI for specific areas such as teaching materials and examination scripts could be accessed on the Universities Scotland website at <http://www.foi-he.org/FoINewsGuidance.htm>.

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

926.1 The Senate approved the joint recommendation from the undergraduate and postgraduate Academic Standards Committees that the current Accreditation Agreement between the University of Aberdeen and the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) be extended by two years. The Agreement, which formally ended on 31 December 2004, would run until 31 December 2006.

926.2 SAC had indicated that it was currently reviewing the status of the small number of its programmes which were currently validated by the University and was considering the possibility of these programmes being validated by one of its other partner universities. No formal proposal had been formulated as yet. However, given the possibility of change in the near future, SAC had requested a two-year extension to the current agreement. Under the agreement, SAC submits detailed annual reports that are considered by the Academic Standards Committees (ASCs) and this requirement would continue as part of any extension of the agreement. The annual reports submitted to date had been approved by the ASCs without exception.

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

926.3 The Senate noted that the Academic Standards Committees, on the recommendation of the relevant Colleges, had approved changes to the list of courses and programmes available as under:

926.4 Concern was expressed regarding the implications arising from the late withdrawal of degree programmes midway through the admissions process. It was, however, noted that the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service was dealing with the matter and was ensuring that the small number of applicants affected by the withdrawal of these degrees were offered entry to alternative programmes.

(A) UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATES AND DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Science

Introduction of new Bachelor of Science programme in 'Forest Conservation'.

Withdrawal of the Bachelor of Science programmes in 'Animal Care', 'Animal Health and Welfare', 'Animal Science', 'Crop and Soil Sciences', 'Equine Science'; of the 'ordinary' Degree of BSc Agriculture; and of the BSc Agriculture Honours programme in Animal Science.

(B) POSTGRADUATE COURSES

Al-Maktoum Institute

Introduction of new validated level 5 courses: 'Islam and Muslims in History and Society'; 'Core Sources and Approaches in the Study of Islam and Muslims'; 'The Theoretical Framework of Islamic Jerusalem'; 'History of Islamic Jerusalem I: from 'Umar to Salah al-Din'; 'Postgraduate Research Methods in the Study of Islam and Muslims'; 'Islam and the West: multiculturalism, globalisation, and Muslims'; 'History of Islamic Jerusalem II: from the late Crusades to the contemporary era'.

Engineering and Physical Sciences

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Information Technology'; 'Web Design & Administration'; 'Systems Analysis & Design'.

Geosciences

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Geospatial Data Acquisition & Image Processing'; 'Geographical Information Systems (GIS) & Geospatial Data Analysis'; 'Geovisualisation for Presentation and Analysis'; 'Research Design and Methods'; 'Geospatial Aspects of Current Issues in the Geosciences'; 'Integrated Applications of Geospatial Technologies'; 'Planning a GIS Project'; 'Dissertation in Applied Geospatial Technology'; 'Project in Applied Geospatial Technology'.

Withdrawal of the courses: GG5803 and GG5804.

Law

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Peoples, Indigenous People and Minorities in International Law'; 'Comparative and International Perspectives on Company Law'; 'International Economic Law: The World Trade Organization'; 'Corporate Governance'; 'European Economic Law'.

(C) POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Al-Maktoum Institute

Introduction of new validated programmes: 'MLitt in Islamic Jerusalem Studies' and 'MLitt in Islamic Studies'.

Engineering and Physical Sciences

Introduction of new programme 'Postgraduate Diploma in Information Systems'.

Geosciences

Introduction of new programme 'MSc in Applied Geospatial Technology'.

Law

Introduction of new programmes: 'LLM in Property and Sustainable Development Law'; 'LLM in Human Rights and Criminal Justice'; 'LLM in Human Rights'; 'LLM in International Business Law (Distance Learning)'.

Amendment to programme 'LLM in Criminal Justice and Human Rights'.

#### Medical Sciences

Introduction of new programmes: 'MSc in Medical Biotechnology'; 'MSc in Medical Molecular Microbiology'; 'MSc in Medical Physics Computing'; 'MSc in Occupational Health'; 'MSc in Pure and Applied Immunology'.

#### **ACADEMIC DRESS: DEGREE OF DOCTOR *HONORIS CAUSA***

927. The Senate approved the following gown and hood specifications for the Honorary Degree of Doctor *Honoris Causa*:

- (i) If the Doctor's scarlet cloth gown is worn, it will be distinguished by dark blue silk facings and linings to the sleeves, in each case edged with gold silk. The string on both sleeves will be of dark blue, gathered with a dark blue button.
- (ii) If the Black Gown is worn, the hood will be of scarlet cloth, lined with dark blue silk and edged with gold silk.

#### **GRADUATIONS *IN ABSENTIA***

928.1 The Senate noted that details of those qualified to receive degrees, diplomas and other awards who had applied to have them conferred *in absentia* could be viewed in the Senate Office of the Registry (see Appendix to Minutes of June 2005).

928.2 The Senate agreed to confer the degrees on, and award the diplomas and other qualifications to, the persons stated.