

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

**SENATUS ACADEMICUS**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 March 2004**

Present: Principal, Professors Sewel and Houlihan, Dr J Roberts, Professors Logan, Rodger, MacGregor, Hubbuck, Sleeman, Racey, Buckland, Sharp, Gane, Chandler, Fraser, Graham, Alexander, Howe, Player, Webster, Saunders, Arter, Beaumont, Mitchell and Kunin, Dr B Fennell, Ms C Macaslan, Professor Imrie, Ms D McKenzie Skene, Dr W Long, Professor Urwin, Dr A Clarke, Mrs L Stephen, Professors Burgess and Adams, Dr P Benson, Mr W Brotherstone, Professor Duff, Dr S Lawrie, Dr J Liversidge, Professors Reid and Salmon, Dr D Heddle, Dr X Lambin, Dr W McCausland, Dr J MacDowall, Dr D Macphee, Dr M Masson, Professor AJ Mordue, Dr L Philip, Dr H Sinclair, Dr J Skakle, Mr S Styles, Dr M Syrontinski, Dr H Wallace, Ms J Duncan, Mr J Dunphy, Mr D Cockburn, Mr G Humphries, Ms N Drennan and Ms D White.

Apologies for absence were received from Professors Lyall, Templeton, Thomson, Baker, Helms, Webster, Little, Bryden, Flin, Simpson, Secombes, Dr P Kinnear, Mr G Pryor, Professor Archbold, Ms L Clark, Professors Lurie, Shucksmith, Dr J Geddes, Dr D Hay, Mrs B Hookey, Dr J King, Dr H McKenzie, Professor Memon, Mrs M Ross and Mr D Donaldson.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

814. The notes of the meeting held on 28 January 2004 were approved.

**STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL**

815.1 In opening his statement, the Principal updated the Senate on three important issues: he indicated that significant activity was being focused on recruitment and attracting academic staff of all grades and that good progress was being made; that details of the annual promotions exercise would be circulated to all staff very shortly; and that Applicant Open Days were being held as part of the University's undergraduate recruitment strategy. On invitation from the Principal, Professor Houlihan indicated that about 500 applicants and their parents were attending the BSc Applicant Open Day which was taking place that day and initial feedback had been very positive. He reminded the Senate that the MA Applicant Open Day would take place the following week and he recorded his thanks to all concerned who were striving to make these days as successful as possible in terms of persuading applicants to accept the University's offer of admission.

815.2 In closing his statement, the Principal referred to the current industrial dispute with the AAUT. He indicated that the University did not wish to depart from the principle of national collective bargaining on pay and that the proposed framework agreement provided scope to address the AAUT's concerns. The Principal indicated that the University's primary obligation was to staff and students and to ensure that teaching and learning proceeded as smoothly as possible. In acknowledging the AAUT's concerns, he had asked the University Secretary to write to the Secretary of the AAUT requesting an early meeting to explore utilising the flexibility available within the Framework to reach a local consensus. He therefore looked forward to progressing the discussions in the near future and hoped that the dispute could be resolved quickly. In the absence of any discussion the Principal closed his Statement.

**RESEARCH ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2008 : INITIAL DECISIONS BY THE UK FUNDING BODIES**

816.1 Professor Houlihan introduced SHEFC Circular letter HE/04/04 announcing initial decisions by the UK Funding bodies on the Research Assessment Exercise 2008, which had been circulated with the papers, and also drew attention to the summary of the document that has also been circulated (copies filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

- 816.2 Professor Houlihan reported that the census date would be 31 October 2007 and the closing date for submissions would be 13 November 2007. Results would be published in December 2008, and it would be the academic year 2009/2010 before the financial outcomes of the 2008 exercise were implemented. There would be a maximum of four outputs per named researcher, and outputs must have been published between 1 January 2001 and 31 July 2007. There would be no fixed percentage of staff that must be submitted, but those submitted must be staff who had undertaken significant autonomous research. Details has still to be announced in terms of definitions of groups eligible to be submitted for assessment and the means of identifying those to be counted within the volume measure in subsequent funding.
- 816.3 Senate noted that the results would be published as a continuously graded quality profile for each submission at sub-panel level. The quality profile would be based on identifying the proportions of work in each submission reaching each of four defined 'starred' quality levels. Those rated at three or four stars would correspond broadly to international levels, and one and two stars to national levels. Work considered sub-national would be unclassified. The definitions of starred quality levels would be announced later in 2004.
- 816.4 There would be a single assessment method based on expert peer review conducted by discipline-based panels. The process was designed to ensure that joint submissions were not discouraged. Institutions would be asked to indicate their respective shares of joint submissions that would be used to inform the relevant significance of their inputs in the basis of allocating grant. Criteria and working methods for each unit of assessment would be published in draft form for consultation two years before the submission date. There would be separate consultations on the division of the academic landscape between discipline-based sub-panels, and their grouping between the main the panels, and the process for appointing main panel and sub-panel members and the bodies that might be invited to propose people as members. It was expected that panel and sub-panel members would be announced by November 2004.
- 816.5 In the discussion that followed, the following points were noted:-
- (i) In regard to re-formulating the University's aspirations in light of the move to quality profiles, the view was expressed that these must be realistic and rational and that it would not benefit the University by specifying a University-wide level of achievement: it should be left to Heads of College to realistically set their aspirations, after appropriate consultation;
  - (ii) That although the Funding Councils were not expected to publish the funding implications until after the conclusion of the RAE, it was highly probable that the highest ratings would receive funding substantially greater than a mathematical multiplication of the level at which those achieving the one star would be funded;
  - (iii) That since research outputs to be submitted must be published between 1 January 2001 and 31 July 2007, pragmatic decisions needed to be made as to how best to prepare during the next 18 months or so, to ensure the quality of material to be published by the deadline. In this regard, Colleges should develop strategies to support academic staff in ensuring that work was submitted by the deadlines;
  - (iv) That the Funding Bodies were consulting separately on two related issues: a division of the academic landscape between discipline-based sub-panels, and their grouping between main panels; and the process for appointing main panel and sub-panel members, and the bodies that might be invited to propose people as members. It was therefore important that staff attempted to be elected either to the various panels and sub-panels or were on those national bodies with which the Funding Councils would consult on the above two issues once the decisions had been made, it would be for Heads of College to determine under which discipline panel or sub-panel individuals work should be submitted in order to maximise the best possible outcome.

**REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT  
(10 February 2004)**

**1. Senior Management Appointments**

817.1 The Senate noted that the University Court had approved the following appointments:

- (i) Professor S D Logan had been appointed Senior Vice-Principal for an initial period of three years commencing 1 August 2004;
- (ii) Professor I R Torrance had been appointed Vice-Principal and Regent at the rate of 0.5 Full-Time Equivalent and for an initial period of three years commencing 1 August 2004;
- (iii) Professor CHW Gane had been appointed Vice-Principal (Library and Information Services) at the rate of 0.5 Full-Time Equivalent and for an initial period of three years commencing 1 August 2004.

**2. Draft Resolution No of 2004 [Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees]**

817.2 The Senate noted that the University Court had agreed that the draft Resolution [Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees], having been approved by the Senatus Academicus, be forwarded to the General Council and made generally available in terms of Section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966.

**3. Policies and Guidance Notes on Academic Appeals, Student Complaints  
and Termination of Studies or Candidature for an Award.**

817.3 The Senate noted that the University Court had approved the revised Policies and Guidance Notes as recommended by the Senatus Academicus.

**REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING  
(6 February 2004)**

**1. Review of the undergraduate Academic Standards Committees and the Undergraduate Programme Committees**

818.1 The Senate approved, for its part, the following recommendations which were approved by the UCTL on 6 February 2004 following consultation with Heads of School:-

- (i) That the current undergraduate Academic Standards Committees and Undergraduate Programme Committees be abolished and replaced with a single Academic Standards Committee (Undergraduate) with the remit and composition as detailed in Annex A (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).
- (ii) That Annex B, which contained the required amendments to Resolution 195 of 1996, be approved and forwarded to the University Court (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).
- (iii) That, in view of (i) above, the title of Undergraduate Programme Committee Convener be revised to Director of Undergraduate Programmes for each of the University's Areas of Study, with the specific responsibilities of the Directors of Undergraduate Programmes being determined by the UCTL.
- (iv) That, in view of the streamlining of the Committee structure arising from (i) above and in the light of revisions already approved to the procedures for the approval of courses and programmes, the annual Planning Cycle deadline be revised from 31 October to 30 November.

## **2. Provision of Special Exam Conditions**

818.2 The Senate noted that following receipt of a memo from a Head of School setting out a number of concerns in regard to the increasing difficulties in making provision for students requiring special exam conditions, the UCTL had been invited to consider the proposal that the Registry should, subject to feasibility within the current constraints of the timetable, provide for each examination slot a separate room(s) for students requiring extra time. Schools would be responsible for booking students into this room but invigilation would be arranged by the Registry. The Senate noted that the UCTL had approved this proposal and agreed that the Registry should implement this with effect from the June 2004 examination diet, subject to feasibility. Full details of the revised arrangements would be circulated to Heads of School and Disability Co-ordinators.

## **3. Examination Timetabling**

818.3 The Senate noted that the examination timetable for the first half-session 2003/04 had a significant reduction of Saturday and evening examinations. There had been 12 evening examinations (10 of which had been requested for evening classes) and there had been 7 examinations on Saturdays (5 of which had been specifically requested as they were for distance learners).

## **4. Quality Enhancement Engagements: online support for staff**

818.4 The Senate noted that, in support of the University's Quality Enhancement Strategy, a proposal had been made to construct a web-based resource available to all staff. The website, to be constructed and maintained jointly by the Educational & Staff Development Unit (ESDU) and the Registry, would provide:

- a quick reference guide to quality enhancement, with definitions and information on the primary bodies involved and the funding opportunities that they provide;
- a facility to allow the University to showcase and disseminate examples of its own good practice across the HE sector;
- a monthly briefing on quality enhancement;
- an up-to-date list of QE-related events, both internal and external;
- a space for Colleges to share information gathered from attending QE events.

## **5. Revised Composition of Quest**

818.5 The Senate noted that following the establishment of Colleges and the formation of College Teaching and Learning Committees, it had been proposed that the composition of the Quality Enhancement Strategy Team (QUEST) be revised. The revised QUEST would continue to develop and keep under review an institutional strategy for quality enhancement. The UCTL approved the revised composition of the Quality Enhancement Strategy Team and agreed that, where appropriate, other relevant staff (e.g. staff from the Educational and Staff Development Unit and DISS) would be invited to attend meetings.

## **6. ILTHE Accreditation**

818.6 The Senate noted that, following a visit by an ILTHE accreditation panel on 22 January 2004, the University of Aberdeen's Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching had been awarded full accreditation. Participants completing this programme successfully would now be awarded Full Membership of the ILTHE.

## **7. ELIR Timetable**

818.7 The Senate noted that the UCTL had approved an outline timetable for preparation for the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review by the QAA that would take place in Spring 2004/05. Further detail in regard to the planning for this visit would be brought to the March meeting of the UCTL.

## REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES

### 1. Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Pure Science (BSc)

- 819.1 The Senate approved recommendations by the Undergraduate Programme Committee (Science) that amendments be made to the Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Pure Science, as under:

#### Regulation 5.1

To the list of courses in Group A add 'Physical Sciences'.

- 819.2 The Senate further agreed that the University Court be asked to incorporate these changes in the Resolution 'Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees', the draft text of which was currently before the Business Committee of the General Council.

### 2. Draft Resolution No of 2004 [Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Rural Business Management (BA Rural Business Management)]

- 819.3 The Senate considered the recommendations of the two undergraduate Academic Standards Committees encompassed within the draft Resolution 'Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Rural Business Management (BA Rural Business Management)'. This would enable the introduction of the validated Degree of BA Rural Business Management offered by the Scottish Agricultural College to replace the validated Degree of BTechnol in Business Management (Agri-Food).
- 819.4 A concern was raised by a member of Senate that employers might be confused by the proposed degree when comparing it with the University's MA in Rural Land and Business Management, which was professionally accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The concern was that the high professional reputation of this MA programme would be put at risk by the introduction of a similarly titled degree, albeit one at BA level.
- 819.5 The member concerned agreed to put his concerns in writing to the Convener of the relevant Academic Standards Committee. Further discussion was therefore deferred.

### 3. New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes

- 820.1 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:

#### (A) INDIVIDUAL DEGREE AND DIPLOMA COURSES (UNDERGRADUATE)

##### Biological Sciences

Introduction of new level 1 courses: 'Ecology and Environmental Science' (replacing EV1505); 'Organismal Biology' (replacing BI1003); 'The Cell' (replacing BI1505).

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Euroleague Environmental Science Field Course'.

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Molecular Ecology and Evolution'.

Withdrawal of the course SR4002.

##### Medical Sciences

Introduction of new level 4 courses: 'Honours Advanced Molecular Biology' (replacing MB4003); 'Biochemistry A' (replacing BC4009); 'Biochemistry Immunology A' (replacing BC4010); 'Medical Molecular Biology' (replacing BM4006); 'Biotechnology A' (replacing BT4004); 'Genetics A' (replacing GN4005); 'Genetics Immunology A' (replacing GN4006); 'Immunology A' (replacing IM4001); 'Molecular Biology A' (replacing MB4003); 'Microbiology A' (replacing MC4008); 'Molecular Microbiology A' (replacing MC4009).

## Public Health

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Health Promotion for Sports Studies'.

## Physical Sciences

Introduction of new level 2 course: 'Introduction to Materials'.

## (B) UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE AND DEGREE PROGRAMMES

### Degree of Bachelor of Science

Introduction of new Honours programme in Biotechnology (Applied Molecular Biology) with Industrial Placement.

Withdrawal of Designated programmes in Computing with Statistics; Mathematics with Statistics; Psychology with Statistics.

Withdrawal of Honours programmes in Computing with Statistics; Mathematics with Statistics; Psychology with Statistics.

## (C) POSTGRADUATE COURSES

### Biological Sciences (Forestry)

Introduction of new level 5 course 'Special Topics in Forestry'.

Withdrawal of the course FY5004.

### Business School (Economics)

Introduction of new level 5 course 'Industrial Marketing'.

### Geosciences (Land Economy)

Introduction of new level 5 course 'Legal Regulations' (from 2004/05).

### Medicine

Introduction of new level 5 course 'Gene-nutrient Interactions'.

Withdrawal of the course MT5001.

## (D) POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

### Engineering and Physical Sciences

Withdrawal of MSc in Environmental Analytical Chemistry; MSc in Technology & Management in the Oil & Gas Industry (from 2004/05).

### Language and Literature (English)

MLitt in English Language in Britain and Beyond to be re-titled MLitt in Sociolinguistics.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (SCOTLAND) 2002

821. The Senate approved, for its part, and agreed to recommend to the University Court, recommendations in regard to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, including a *Protocol for the Handling of Section 1 Requests* (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

### APPOINTMENT OF COLLEGE POSTGRADUATE OFFICERS

- 822.1 The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the Heads of College, the appointment of the following as College Postgraduate Officers to undertake a range of functions in regard to postgraduate student administration, including those previously undertaken by University Postgraduate Officers in addition to those that relate to College-specific activities, with immediate effect:

College of Arts & Social Sciences: Professor AM Saunders  
Dr FA Murphy  
Dr D Hay  
Ms A-M Slater  
Dr HD Lardy  
Professor PM Dawson  
Dr JH Wyllie

College of Life Sciences & Medicine: Professor DJ Lurie  
Professor DJ Shaw  
Dr T Stuchbury  
Professor NR Webster

College of Physical Sciences: Dr J Feldmann  
Dr RD Neilson  
Professor CT Spracklen  
Dr LJ Philip

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE (POSTGRADUATE)

- 823.1 The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate) [ASC (Pg)] and after consultation with Heads of College following a review of postgraduate student administration, a revised composition for the ASC (Pg); and approved, on the recommendation of the Heads of College, the following membership of the ASC (Pg) with immediate effect. The composition provides for at least one College Postgraduate Officer from each of the University's current Areas of Study.

#### **Composition**

Convener: to be appointed by the Senate for three years in the first instance on the joint recommendation of Heads of College, after appropriate consultation.

Four College Postgraduate Officers from the College of Arts & Social Sciences and three College Postgraduate Officers from each of the Colleges of Life Sciences & Medicine and Physical Sciences, on the recommendation of the Heads of the relevant College, after consultation, with at least one College Postgraduate Officer representing each of the University's Areas of Study.

One student nominated by the Students' Association, normally registered for a Postgraduate Degree, Diploma or Certificate.

#### **Membership** from 1 March 2004

Convener: Professor GA Burgess

Four College Postgraduate Officers from the College of Arts & Social Sciences:

Dr JH Wyllie (Arts and Social Sciences)

Dr D Hay (Education)  
Dr FA Murphy (Divinity)  
Ms A-M Slater *vice* Dr HD Lardy (Law)

Three College Postgraduate Officers from the College of Life Sciences & Medicine:

Professor DJ Lurie (Medicine)  
Professor DJ Shaw (Science)  
Dr T Stuchbury (Science)

Three College Postgraduate Officers from the College of Physical Sciences:

Dr R Neilson (Engineering)  
Dr J Feldmann (Science)  
Dr LJ Philip (Science)

One student nominated by the Students' Association:

Vacant

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

- 824.1 The Senate noted that a list of those qualified to receive degrees, diplomas and certificates who had applied to have them conferred *in absentia* was available in the Senate Office of the Registry (see Appendix to Minutes of June 2004).
- 824.2 Senate conferred the degrees on, and awarded the diplomas and other qualifications to, the persons stated.

### **HONORARY DEGREE**

- 824.1 The Senate noted that the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music would be conferred on Dame Gillian Weir at a ceremony to be held in King's College Chapel at 7.15 p.m. on Tuesday 20 April 2004, at which Dame Gillian would perform the Inaugural Recital on the new organ.