

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

**SENATUS ACADEMICUS**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2005**

- Present: Principal, Professor Houlihan, Ms C Macaslan, Professors Gane, Haites, Rodger, MacGregor, Hubbuck, Baker, Bruce, Buckland, Jordan, Chandler, Howe, Saunders, Secombes, Dr P McGeorge, Professors Hughes, Imrie, Carey Miller, Metzger, Dr WF Long, Dr P Schlicke, Professor Burgess, Archbold, Dr P Benson, Dr G Coghill, Professors Duff, Dr JC Forbes, Dr S Lawrie, Professors Lurie, Salmon, Dr P Edwards, Dr C Gray, Dr WD McCausland, Dr MR Masson, Dr P Mealor, Dr D Pearson, Mrs ML Ross, Dr J Skakle, Mr SC Styles, Dr M Syrotinski, Dr SP Townsend, Dr RPK Wells, Professor M Wiercigroch, Mr P Richards, Miss Felicity Keefe and Mr Alistair Mark.
- Apologies: Professors Logan, Forrester, Templeton, Dr DH Sleeman, Professors Killham, Fraser, Graham, Booth, Flin, Watson, Webster, Mrs L Stephen, Dr PC Davidson, Professors Blaikie, Mrs R Fitzgerald, Mr J Chalmers, Ms L Clark, Dr J Liversidge, Dr J Farmer, Dr J Geddes, Dr LH Philip and Dr H Wallace.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

964. The Notes of the meeting of 15 June 2005 and the Minutes of the In Person Graduation Ceremonies held between 4 and 8 July 2005 and of the *In Absentia* Graduations held in July and August 2005 were approved.

**STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL**

- 965.1 In welcoming members to the new academic year, the Principal welcomed Cathy Macaslan who was attending in her capacity as the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching).
- 965.2 In selecting highlights from last year, the Principal expressed delight at the highly complimentary Enhancement-Led Institutional Review Report which had recently been published (Minute 973.3 below also refers), which was a significant achievement for the University and one in which many staff had participated. He also considered that staff recruitment during the last year had been a remarkable success.
- 965.3 The Principal drew Senate's attention to several recent achievements. He congratulated Professor Andy Porter, the recipient of the Ernst and Young UK Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the Science and Technology category (Professor Porter having already been awarded the equivalent award for Scotland) for the success of Haptogen Ltd. He also congratulated Professor Rodger Pertwee, who had been recognised by a leading scientific website as one of the most cited scientists in the world. Professor Pertwee and Professor William Wisden, who was soon to join the University, were the first University of Aberdeen scientists to appear on this prestigious list since the late Professor Hans Kosterlitz. The Principal also congratulated Professor Janet Todd on her recent edition of the novels of Jane Austen, and Professor Cairns Craig on his recent election to a Fellowship of the British Academy.
- 965.4 In closing his statement, the Principal outlined two challenges facing the University. It was essential, that, in staff recruitment, the University continued to attract high quality staff at the same time as retaining its existing staff. In regard to students, while undergraduate recruitment had been relatively successful, this was less so on the postgraduate front (Minute 967.2 below also refers).
- 965.5 The Principal then invited the Vice-Principal (Research and Commercialisation) to update the Senate on progress with planning towards the next Research Assessment Exercise. In so doing, Professor Houlihan drew Senate's attention to four areas. Colleges had opted for a mix of internal and external reviewers appropriate to subject areas in assisting the University in selecting and reviewing publications for submission. Development of a new publications database had proceeded on schedule and would go live for all staff to populate in the very near future. A message would be sent to all staff providing details of the new database and campus-wide demonstrations of the database would be held during the winter term. Consultation had taken place with the Colleges on the Panels' draft criteria and working methods, with the finalised criteria to be released to institutions in January 2006. And he drew Senate's

attention to a number of legal obligations in terms of equal opportunities and the RAE: these were being addressed by a small working group convened by the Vice-Principal (Library and Information Services).

- 965.6 On invitation to provide further details of the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) Report and process, the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) highlighted the very significant role played by Dr Graeme Roberts, recently retired Vice-Principal, and the many people involved in preparing the University for, and participating in, the review process. The ELIR Report had given the University the highest rating in regard to the University's management of its quality of provision and the academic standards of its awards, and had also identified several areas of good practice, as well as encouraging the University to consider some areas that might be strengthened. The Report had also endorsed the emerging Learning and Teaching Strategy. Ms Macaslan emphasised that the ELIR Report was a public document, and one with which the University should feel very proud. While it could be used for recruitment purposes, it was important that the University used the Report as part of its continual enhancement of the quality of learning and teaching and to ensure that quality enhancement became embedded within our learning and teaching strategy.

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

- 966.1 The University Secretary informed Senate that two meetings of the Review Group had been held, with two more planned by Christmas. All members of Senate would shortly be asked to complete a brief, web-based, questionnaire. The Working Group had also discussed how the review of Senate might impact on the parallel review being undertaken by the University Court. Oral reports would be made at subsequent Senate meetings.
- 966.2 In response to a request from the President of the Students' Association, the Principal agreed to refer the possibility of student involvement in the review to the Senior Vice-Principal, who was convening the Working Group but who was unavoidably unable to be present at the Senate.

#### **REVIEW OF THE PROVISION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES**

- 966.3 The Vice-Principal (Library and Information Services) updated Senate on the outcomes of the so-called 'DISS Review' and on progress with the new University Library Project.
- 966.4 In regard to the former, Professor Gane informed Senate of the rationale behind the University deciding to commission an external review, which had been undertaken by two consultants who had interviewed more than 50 members of staff and students. The key conclusions of their review were that the Directorate was not fully integrated into the new University structures; that there was a 'trust barrier' between DISS and the academic community; that there was a gap between academic requirements and the service provided by DISS; and they had concluded that changes should be made to the Directorate's organisation and services.
- 966.5 In taking forward the review report, it had been proposed to de-converge the current Directorate into two service areas: one to provide Library, Historic and Museum Collections & Archives services; and the other to provide IT services. These would link to the University's governance and information strategy, and provide greater engagement with Colleges and improved service delivery. Senior appointments were being sought to head these two areas, and recruitment would be at the same relative level as recent academic appointments.
- 966.6 The decision to embark on the new Library Project had been a consequence of recognition that the current library provision was inadequate and could not meet the University's needs or match its aspirations; and because the University had custodial obligations in regard to its special libraries and archives, which were an extremely important asset and which were under-exploited. The vision behind the Library Project was to provide a facility which would provide a new cultural hub for the University, the City and the Region; and a building which would be emblematic of the University's confidence and its ambition and which would be of real cultural significance for Scotland. After considering various options, Senate noted that the University Court had given approval in principle to an all-new build that would cost approximately £55M within the context of the University's planned capital expenditure of more than £250M over the next few years. It was expected that the bulk of the library costs would be generated by fundraising, in order to minimise delay to other worthy projects. Following a recent design competition, a design team had been identified and would be announced following successful due diligence and once EU procurement rules had been satisfied. An announcement would be made as soon as possible and the successful architects and engineers would be asked to engage with the University community in outlining the proposals.

- 966.7 In the discussion that ensued, concern was expressed at the planned de-convergence of DISS in regard to the IT basis for much of library activity and operation. It was noted that this argument had previously been expressed but that service delivery should not determine the management structure. The proposed de-convergence would not affect the IT requirements of library service provision.
- 967.8 In closing the discussion, Professor Gane indicated that he would provide progress reports, as appropriate, and that he would be more than happy to meet with individuals or groups of staff if they wished to discuss any aspect of the way forward in regard to the provision of library and information services.

#### **NEW ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATIONS (UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT) 2005**

- 967.1 The Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) reported that admissions of UK and EU first degree students was at, or slightly above, target. Arts-based (including non-accredited BMus) and Law degrees were expected to exceed their targets slightly, while BSc degrees were anticipated to recruit almost exactly on target. In both BSc and Engineering programmes, there was a small swing to admissions with advanced standing. Where intake was controlled by the Scottish Executive, Medicine had met its target and Primary Education was slightly above target. The PGDE (Secondary) programme had met most of its targets but not those in priority areas. Generally, undergraduate overseas recruitment was lower than target and reasons for this were being explored.
- 967.2 In regard to postgraduate student recruitment, the Vice-Principal (Research and Commercialisation) indicated that new research student registration had only just commenced and details would be provided in the annual admissions report in November. However, recruitment to postgraduate taught programmes was below target for both home/EU and overseas students. He indicated that recruitment to programmes commencing in January would be required and urged Colleges to identify quickly those programmes that would offer second half-session intakes. In response to a question concerning the relative position of the University in regard to postgraduate taught recruitment, Professor Houlihan reported that other universities had shown increases in recruitment.
- 967.3 The Principal emphasised that a strong postgraduate base was intellectually healthy for universities and must be one of our priorities for the future, both in terms of postgraduate taught and postgraduate research candidates.
- 967.4 Two important comments from the Students' Association would be taken forward, namely the greater encouragement of final year honours students to embark on postgraduate study; and the suggestion of targeting recent graduates as potential candidates for entry in the second half-session.

#### **REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT (28.06.05 & 13.09.05)**

- 968.1 The Senate noted the actions taken by the University Court at its meetings of 28 June 2005 and 13 September 2005, as under:

##### **1. Strategic Plan**

- 968.2 The Court approved the update to the Institutional Strategic Plan 2004-2009, it having been previously the subject of consultation with the Senate.

##### **2. Library Project Board**

- 968.3 The Court received a progress report from the Library Project Board. The Court agreed that a detailed analysis of the funding implications of an all-new build approach be prepared with detailed recommendations supported by a business case and set in the context of wider plans for institutional capital investment and be brought back to Court in due course.

##### **3. Court Effectiveness Review**

- 968.4 The Court received a progress report from the Effectiveness Review of Court Working Group, of which Mrs Margaret Ross, Senate Assessor on Court, and Professor Logan, Convenor of the Senate Effectiveness Review, were members.

#### **4. University of the Highlands and Islands**

968.5 The Court received a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which sought approval of a process by which the University, together with Edinburgh and Strathclyde universities, had been asked by SHEFC and the University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute to assist in securing University title for the Institute. The Court approved the arrangements in principle, subject to a fuller proposal on the arrangements being brought forward in due course. Due to the timescales involved with the external institutions concerned, the paper was unable to be brought to the June meeting of Senate.

#### **5. Nominating Committee**

968.6 The Court approved a recommendation to appoint Mr S Styles as a member of the Chapel Committee.

#### **6. Resolution No 242 of 2005 [General Regulations for Postgraduate Qualifications: Credit Requirements for Taught Postgraduate Awards]**

968.7 As recommended by Senate, the Court approved the Resolution (No 242 of 2005) without forwarding it to the Business Committee of the General Council and generally making it available, as provided for, exceptionally, by Section 6 (2) of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, so that the amended provisions could be applied to students admitted to postgraduate taught programmes of study in September 2005.

#### **7. Resolution No of 2005 [Code of Practice on Student Discipline]**

968.8 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. This was subject to Sections 6 and 9 being amended to reflect the resulting management responsibilities arising from the retirement of the Director of Student Affairs.

### **REPORTS FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

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

968.9 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)**

##### Centre for Lifelong Learning

Introduction of new level 2 course: 'An Approach to Psychodynamic Counselling' (commencing 2006/07).

##### Cultural History

Introduction of new level 2 course: 'Brains, Breeding and the Bomb: from Enlightenment to Scepticism'.

##### Engineering

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Group Design Project Oil and Gas Studies'.

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Individual Project for Oil and Gas Studies (BEng)'.

Introduction of new level 5 course: 'Mathematical Optimisation'.

##### French

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'The Politics of Difference in Contemporary France A'; 'Contemporary French Film A'; and 'Interwar Literature and Politics A'.

Introduction of new level 4 courses: 'The Politics of Difference in Contemporary France B'; 'Contemporary French Film B'; and 'Interwar Literature and Politics B'.

### Geography and Environment

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'Economic Development and Regeneration A'; 'Cultural Geography of Russia A'; and 'Planning and Environmental Law A'.

Introduction of new level 4 courses: 'Economic Development and Regeneration B'; 'Cultural Geography of Russia B'; and 'Planning and Environmental Law B'.

### Geology and Petroleum Geology

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Oil Industry Overview'.

Introduction of new level 4 courses: 'Engineering from Borehole to Surface'; and 'Geoscience in Exploration and Production of Oil'.

### German

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'German Language Study'; and 'Opposing Movements: Classicism and Romanticism in Germany A'.

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Opposing Movements: Classicism and Romanticism in Germany B'.

### Hispanic Studies

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Writing War, Dictatorship and Democracy: Paraguay in the Work of Augusto Roa Bastos A'.

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Writing War, Dictatorship and Democracy: Paraguay in the Work of Augusto Roa Bastos B'.

### History

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'The Making of England, AD 597-927'; 'Germany, 1516-1806: Reformation, Empire and Enlightenment'; and 'Germany, 1806-1914: Making an Empire'.

### International Relations

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Middle Eastern Politics'.

### Italian

Withdrawal of courses: IT1003, IT1503, IT2003 and IT2503.

### Land Economy

Introduction of new level 2 courses: 'Spatial Planning, Design and Development'; and 'Principles of Governance and Public Policy'.

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Economic Development and Regeneration A'.

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Economic Development and Regeneration B'.

Withdrawal of courses: LE2022, LE2024 and LE2524.

### Philosophy

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'Warrant in Contemporary Epistemology'; 'Contextualism in Epistemology'; 'Philosophy and "Ordinary Life"'; and 'Ethical-Religious Themes in Wittgenstein, Levinas and Derrida'.

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'The Epistemology of Testimony'.

#### Politics

Withdrawal of course PI4549.

#### Property

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Property Finance and Investment'.

#### Zoology

Introduction of new level 4 courses 'Advanced Behavioural Ecology'; and 'Marine Benthic Ecology'.

### (B) UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE AND DEGREE PROGRAMMES

#### Degree of MA

Withdrawal of honours and designated programmes: 'Coastal Management' and 'Sustainable Development'.

#### Engineering

Introduction of new programme 'Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering with Oil and Gas Studies'.

### (C) POSTGRADUATE COURSES

#### Business School

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Quality Management'; 'Supply Chain Management'; and 'Managing Diversity'.

#### School of Divinity, History and Philosophy

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Oral history: Training, Ethics, Theory'; 'Writing the History of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century': 'Sources, Methods and Interpretations'; 'Science, Technology, Medicine and the Creation of Empire, c.1760 –1939'; 'Advanced Topics in Formal and Philosophical Logic'; 'Advanced Topics in Practical Philosophy'; 'Truth and Knowledge: Contemporary Issues'; 'Britain and Ireland in an Age of Migration, 300 – 600'; 'Icelandic Sagas'; 'Scottish and Irish Emigrants in Europe and the Atlantic World, c.1500 – 1750';

Withdrawal of HI5023/5523 and HI5024/5524.

#### School of Geosciences

Withdrawal of GG5302

#### School of Language and Literature

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Thinking Across Cultures'; 'Narrative, Culture and History'; 'Writing, Memory and Identity'; 'Issues in Comparative and Cultural Studies'; 'Dissertation in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies'; 'Don't Look Now? Extreme Images in Film and Television'; 'Socio-linguistics Methods 1'; 'Models of Language in Society'; 'Models of Minority Language Policy and Planning'; 'Research Methods in Minority Language Policy and Planning'; 'Legal Regimes for the Protection of Minority Languages'; 'Socio-economic Development and Minority Language Policy and Planning'; 'The Media and Minority Language Policy and Planning'; 'Issues in Acquisition Planning for Minority Languages'; 'Implementing Minority Language Legislation and Policy in Scotland'; 'Issues in Corpus Planning for Minority Languages'; 'Dissertation in Language Policy and Planning'; 'Poetry in Ireland and Scotland: The Traditions'.

## School of Law

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Research Methods by Distance Learning' and 'LLM Dissertation'.

## School of Medical Sciences

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Introduction to Medical Biotechnology'; 'Special Study Module 1 – Biologic Therapies'; 'Dissertation in Molecular and Cellular Immunology'; 'Immunology: Back to Basics'; 'Immunology in Health and Disease'; 'Research Project in Molecular and Cell Immunology'; 'Immunology Research Tutorials'; 'Assays of Immune Function'; 'Practical Skills for Biomedical Research'; 'Hot Topics in Molecular and Cellular Immunology'.

## (D) POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

### Business School

MSc in Finance and Property (commencing 2006/07)

### School of Divinity, History and Philosophy

MLitt/PgDip in Philosophy

MLitt/PgDip in Religion, History and Culture

### School of Language and Literature

MSc/PgDip in Comparative Literature and Thought

MLitt in Modern Thought (by Research)

MLitt/PgDip in Linguistics, Literature and Cultural Studies

MLitt/PgDip in Language Policy and Planning

### School of Medical Sciences

MSc/PgDip/PgCert in Molecular and Cellular Immunology

## **LATEST DATE FOR THE RETURN OF EXAMINATION RESULTS 2005-2006**

969.1 The Senate approved the latest dates for the return of examination results in the session 2005-2006, as under:

### (a) January 2006 Diet of Examinations

- (i) Level 1 and 2 courses by Wednesday 15 February 2006
- (ii) Level 3, 4 and undergraduate Level 5, courses by Friday 17 February 2006
- (iii) Postgraduate taught courses by Friday 24 February 2006

### (b) May/June 2006 Diet of Examinations

- (i) All Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses and undergraduate programmes by Friday 16 June 2006, except those in (ii) below
- (ii) MBChB and BSc Med Sci courses (years 2 or above): Friday 23 June 2006 [year 2]; Monday 3 July 2006 [years 4 and 5]; or Friday 7 July 2006 [year 3]
- (iii) Postgraduate taught course and programme results, for those candidates completing all the requirements of their programme and hoping to graduate in July 2006, by Friday 16 June 2006
- (iv) All other postgraduate taught courses by Friday 23 June 2006

### (c) August 2006 Diet of Examinations

- (i) Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses by Wednesday 30 August 2006
- (ii) Postgraduate taught courses and programmes by Friday 20 October 2006

### (d) MB ChB (year 3) and BSc Medical Science Examinations held at other times

- (i) Phase II (3M): 27 March 2006 (1<sup>st</sup> attempt) and 28 April 2006 (resit)
- (ii) Phase III (3M): 2 June 2006
- (iii) BSc MedSci: 10 March 2006 and 1 September 2006

#### **DATES OF TERMS**

970. The Senate approved the Dates of Terms for 2006-2007 and, provisionally, those for the sessions to 2015-2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes).

#### **SENATE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE**

971. The Senate approved a recommendation by the Head of the relevant College that Professor Francis Watson be appointed to the Senate Undergraduate Academic Appeals Committee, *vice* Dr Ian McFarland.

#### **DIRECTORS OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

972. The Senate approved the appointment or re-appointment of the following as Directors of Undergraduate Programmes for three years from 1 October 2005, on the recommendation of the Heads of the relevant College:

Mrs L Stephen (Education)  
Professor F B Watson (Divinity)  
Professor E Metzger (Law)  
Professor G Seymour (Medicine)

#### **CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

- 973.1 The Senate noted that the University Court, at its meeting of 13 September 2005, agreed that changes to Sections 6 and 9 of the Code of Practice on Student Discipline should be approved by Officers outwith the meeting before the draft Resolution was passed to the Business Committee of the General Council for approval (Minute 968.8 refers).

- 973.2 In view of the above, the Senate approved the following changes to Sections 6 and 9 of the Code of Practice on Student Discipline, as appropriate:

- (i) that references to the Director of Student Affairs should be changed to the Deputy Secretary;
- (ii) that references to the Director of Information Systems and Services should be changed to the Head of the relevant service.

#### **ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW: 2005**

- 973.3 The Senate noted that the Report of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Review Team that undertook an Enhancement-Led Institutional Review of the University in March/April 2005 had recently been published. The report was very largely positive, with only a small number of issues identified by the Review Team for consideration by the University. Only one specific judgement was made by the Team, in regard to the University's management of its quality of provision and the academic standards of its awards. In this regard, the University was awarded *broad confidence* - the highest of the three judgements which could be made by the Review Team. A copy of the full report was available on the QAA's website at:

[www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reports/instReports.asp?instID=H-0170](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/reports/instReports.asp?instID=H-0170)

#### **AWARD OF ENDOWED PRIZES AND MEDALS 2004-05**

- 974.1 The Senate noted the List of the Award of University Prizes and Medals for the session 2004-05 was available at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/prizes.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/prizes.hti)

## UNIVERSITY STATISTICAL REPORT 2004-2005

- 974.2 The noted that the University Statistical Report for 2004-05 was now available. Members who wished to receive a copy should contact the Senate Office (extension 2039).
- 974.3 The Senate also noted that any member wishing to raise a matter on the Report for discussion at the next meeting should submit it, in writing, to the Academic Registrar by 5.00 p.m. on Monday 31 October 2005.

## NOVEMBER GRADUATION CEREMONIES

975. The Senate noted the following:-
- (i) that the Honorary Degree of Doctor *Honoris Causa* would be conferred on Tracey Robb and Robert Sinclair, and the Honorary Degree of Master of the University would be conferred on Bryan Dargie, at a ceremony in the Mitchell Hall on Friday 25 November 2005 at 3.00 p.m. In addition, First and Higher Degrees in Arts & Social Sciences, Education, Divinity and Law would be conferred.
  - (ii) that the Honorary Degrees of Doctor of Laws and Doctor *Honoris Causa* would be conferred on James Boyle and George Stevenson, respectively, at a ceremony in the Mitchell Hall on Saturday 26 November 2005 at 11.00 a.m. In addition, First and Higher Degrees in Science, Engineering and Medicine would be conferred.

## GRADUATIONS *IN ABSENTIA*

- 976.1 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 2006).
- 976.2 The Senate agreed to confer the degrees on, and award the diplomas and other qualifications to, the persons stated.