

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6 October 2004

Present: Principal, Professors Logan, Houlihan, Roberts, Gane, Hubbuck, Baker, Bruce, MacInnes, Killham, Jordan, Chandler, Fraser, Booth, Flin, Dawson, Howe, Webster, Saunders, Arter, Imrie, Kunin, Frost, Secombes, Mitchell, Ms C Macaslan, Dr P McGeorge, Professor Smith, Dr WF Long, Dr IA MacFarland, Mrs L Stephen, Professor Archbold, Dr P Benson, Mr WT Brotherstone, Miss R Buchan, Mr J Chalmers, Ms L Clark, Dr J Forbes, Dr S Lawrie, Dr J Liversidge, Professors Salmon, Shucksmith, Dr P Edwards, Dr J Geddes, Dr C Gray, Dr D Hay, Dr X Lambin, Dr W MacCausland, Dr M Masson, Dr P Mealor, Dr W Naphy, Dr D Pearson, Dr L Philip, Dr J Skakle, Dr S Townsend, Dr W van Teijlingen, Professor Watson, Dr R Wells, Mr P Richards and Miss J Niven

Apologies: Professors Haites, Rodger, MacGregor, Templeton, Sleeman, Graham, Ritchie, Racey, Sharp, Watson, Ingold, Simpson, Ayres, Greaves, Mrs D McKenzie Skene, Professors Urwin, Burgess, Davidson, Blaikie, Heys, Lurie, Dr J Farmer, Dr J MacDowall, Dr H McKenzie, Mrs ML Ross, Dr H Sinclair, Dr H Wallace, Mr C Mair, Miss M White and Miss M Whyllie.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

875. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2004 were approved.

STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL

- 876.1 In opening his statement, the Principal welcomed members to the first meeting of Senate of the new academic year.
- 876.2 The Principal reflected that last year had not been an easy one for the University, with the on-going reorganisation following the establishment of Colleges and the two phases of voluntary severance. He was pleased to report, however, a very positive outcome from the last year, and particularly the decision of the University Court that there would be no necessity to move to compulsory redundancy during the current restructuring phase.
- 876.3 Although the University would not be expanding in size in staffing terms, there had been a great deal of recruitment activity recently, which was ongoing. He indicated that the quality of candidates being proposed through Schools and Colleges was exceptional. This had resulted in more than 20 new professorial staff having accepted positions this academic year, with a substantial number of junior academic staff also joining the University. He believed that the future for the University was extremely exciting.
- 876.4 In closing his statement, the Principal informed Senate of two recent items of very positive news. The formal response from the Funding Council on the relative success of the merger with Northern College was extremely positive and indicated that the merger had been a success. The Principal also reported that, towards the end of the last term, the School of Education had won outright, following a competitive process involving all of the Scottish universities that offered teacher education, £1.8 M from the Scottish Executive and the Tom Hunter Foundation for a project entitled "Scottish Teachers for a New Era". This reflected the high regard in which education at the University was viewed by the Scottish Executive and others.
- 876.5 The second item of good news for the University related to the Aberdeen Centre for Environmental Sustainability, which was to be formed as a tri-partite development with the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the MacAulay Institute and would be created and supported by a £4.5 M grant from NERC.
- 876.6 The Principal then invited Professor Houlihan and Professor Gane to report on new admissions and registrations and on the higher education Bill, respectively, before asking the Senior Vice-Principal to address the Senate on the University's strategic direction.
- 876.7 Professor Houlihan commenced his report by informing Senate that the University had met all its undergraduate admissions targets and that the number of new registrations was close to that which had been expected. He conveyed his congratulations to all staff who had been involved in the recruitment process for their tremendous efforts. The position in regard to postgraduate admissions was, however,

less favourable. Although postgraduate taught non-funded new admissions had increased compared with the previous year and were significantly over target, postgraduate taught funded numbers were substantially down on our target. Postgraduate research funded numbers were also currently well below target, although new registrations were continuing. He indicated that various groups within the University were meeting to address these issues of funded numbers.

- 876.8 Professor Gane summarised the recently-published Bill to merge the funding councils. It was clear that the Bill had been substantially changed from the early draft, indicating that the Scottish Executive had listened to the views of the higher education sector, with the Bill satisfactorily addressing the large majority of the objections made to its predecessor. The name of the funding body was to be the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council. This was considered to be a double success for universities in that "Further and Higher" had been used in preference to the original suggestion of "Tertiary", and retention of "funding" should help to emphasise that its main function was funding rather than planning.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2004-2009: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION AROUND THE UNIVERSITY'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- 877.1 In opening his presentation, Professor Logan emphasised the University's ambition of being a world-class university by being "excellent in delivering learning and teaching, in undertaking research and commercialisation, in promoting research and scholarship and in governance and management". The University would also be accessible and inclusive. To achieve our ambition, Professor Logan highlighted the following key areas which underpinned the University's Strategic Plan: those relating to *Quality People*, where the University would attract, develop and retain outstanding staff and students; *Quality Research*, in which the University would be an international, research-led university, recognised for its distinctive, high quality centres for research; *Quality Learning*, where the University would enhance the quality and value of the student learning experience within a research environment; and *Quality Management*, where we would achieve continuous improvement in governance, management and administration. Additionally, the University would utilise *Effective Resourcing*, to sustain and enhance the financial base; and, in regard to *Infrastructure*, the University would maintain and improve the condition, use, and the aesthetic qualities of the University's physical estate, and to enhance the information and electronic resources. He also referred to other aspects that would support the achievement of our ambition: *Collaboration*, where the University would sustain and enhance collaborative networks within Scotland, the UK, Europe and Internationally; and our *International Positioning*, where it was our aim to be recognised internationally as a University of high quality and distinction. The University would also widen *Access and Participation*, by increasing the opportunity and improved participation in Higher Education by students from under-represented groups; and would use its *Community Relations* to serve national and international communities by enhancing the quality of life, cultural strength and intellectual capital.
- 877.2 In regard to *Quality People*, Professor Logan reiterated the Principal's comments that the current recruitment campaign had been highly successful to date, with key staff being attracted in those areas that Colleges had identified for investment in order to underpin the University's strive for excellence. He also indicated that recruitment had taken place in areas where opportunities had arisen to support other areas of the University's Strategic Plan; and mechanisms were being put in place for the retention of existing staff and to allow them to develop and achieve their potential.
- 877.3 In regard to *Quality Research*, Professor Logan presented a summary of the 2001 RAE outcomes, indicating the percentage of the University staff returned in the various RAE rating categories; those units of assessment at Aberdeen, and the staff FTEs, which achieved the highest two RAE ratings; and their relative positioning within the top-ranking areas throughout Scotland. While making no judgements on the information presented, Professor Logan indicated that the data provided useful information to assist the University in deciding where it might focus activity in the future. In doing so, Professor Logan posed several challenges for the University, specifically in regard to the percentage volume of staff to be returned in the next RAE, the subject areas in which we should make returns, and how we should focus our efforts for the future.
- 877.4 In regard to *Quality Learning*, Professor Logan summarised the relative success of the University in achieving 'excellent' ratings in external teaching quality engagements with SHEFC and the QAA during the last decade. And he reported on recently-published data which indicated that the University's policies to improve retention were being successful in that the numbers of students leaving without a qualification were below our benchmark in that aspect. Additionally, our percentage numbers of undergraduate students from state schools was close to our benchmark, and our percentage numbers from the four lowest socio-economic groups were slightly above our benchmark. The challenges in teaching were in regard to our subject mix and the need to debate the extent to which this should

complement our research activity; the facilities necessary to support *Quality Learning*; and the academic support structures required for students and staff.

877.5 In the discussion that followed, the following principal points were noted:

- (i) acknowledgement that tensions existed between the drive to recruit high quality researchers and the recent voluntary severance of staff with heavy teaching loads. Professor Logan's expectation was that, essentially, all University scholars should be involved in teaching and research and that it was up to Heads of College to achieve an appropriate balance, which might vary across disciplines and groups and between Colleges. The University's Strategic Plan also recognised this tension and it was noted that the Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) had established a small group, to include the College Directors of Teaching and Learning, to address this issue over the next few months;
- (ii) in regard to concerns expressed with the reductions in Library budgets in the College of Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Gane, as Vice-Principal for Library and Information Services, indicated that he was well aware of concerns that had been expressed in this regard: to this end, he had invited Heads of College, Directors of Teaching and Learning and of Research, and staff within DISS to consider these issues. A report would be submitted to the Senate, hopefully in January 2005, to allow any changes in the funding model to be put in place by the next financial year;
- (iii) in response to a question from the President of the Students' Association as to the infrastructure in place to retain the University's most successful undergraduates and assist their transition to postgraduate study, the Senior Vice-Principal indicated that the University was considering a variety of measures to provide, generally, more bursaries as part of our general policy to attract postgraduate students;
- (iv) that the RAE was only one measure of how the University might judge itself in terms of its ambition. Professor Logan considered that, contrary to a view expressed at the Senate, he believed that the outcome of the RAE would continue to be a key indicator of Quality Research;
- (v) in response to a question concerning the placing of staff in subject areas for return in the next RAE, Professor Logan indicated that the University was about to embark of a mid-term RAE analysis, under the direction of Professor Houlihan, which should indicate where best to return our staff;
- (vi) acknowledgement that, in regard to the pooling of staff in particular research areas as part of joint submissions in the next RAE, there was a lack of clarity as to how staff might become included in a particular area and that this should be considered further.

877.6 In closing his presentation, Professor Logan welcomed Senate's engagement and advice on areas of the Strategic Plan, which would be reviewed and revised, as required, throughout the year. All Senators were therefore encouraged to communicate with the Senior Vice-Principal on any aspects in regard to the Strategic Plan, either directly or through their Colleges.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT

(29 June 2004 and 14 September 2004)

1. Strategic Planning

878.1 The Senate noted that the Court had approved the University Strategic Plan for 2004-2009, following consultation with the Senate.

2. Tertiary Education (Scotland) Bill

878.2 The Senate noted that the Court had approved the response to the Scottish Executive's consultation on the merger of the Scottish Higher and Further Education Funding Councils, following consultation with the Senate and the wider University community.

3. Resolution No 238 of 2004

[General Regulations for First Degrees: Credit Requirements for the Award of Degrees with Honours]

878.3 The Senate noted that, as recommended by Senate, the Court had approved the Resolution 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 entering Honours programmes in September 2004.

4. Resolution No 239 of 2004
[Regulations for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Scottish Agricultural College) in Rural Business Management (BA (Scottish Agricultural College) Rural Business Management)]

- 878.4 The Senate noted that, as recommended by Senate, the Court had approved the Resolution, 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 with effect from 1 July 2004.

5. Resolution No 236 of 2004
[Chair of Irish and Scottish Studies]

- 878.5 The Senate noted that the Court, having noted that the draft Resolution [Chair of Irish and Scottish Studies] had been considered by the Business Committee of the General Council and the Senate, and that no other representations had been received, had decided to pass the Resolution.
- 878.6 The Senate also noted that the Court had approved the recommendation of the Principal that Professor Tom Devine be appointed to the Chair with immediate effect.

6. Resolution No 237 of 2004
[Supplementary regulations for the award of Combined Degrees with Education]

- 878.7 The Senate noted that the Court, having noted that the draft Resolution [Supplementary Regulations for the Award of Combined Degrees with Education] had been considered by the Business Committee of the General Council and the Senate, and that no other representations had been received, had decided to pass the Resolution.

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEES

1. New and Discontinued Courses and Programmes

- 879.1 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)

Accountancy

Introduction of new level 3 course 'Corporate Finance'.

Agriculture and Forestry

Withdrawal of courses: BI25A3, AG3307 and AG3515.

Celtic

Introduction of new level 1 courses: 'Introductory Gaelic Language 1', 'Introductory Gaelic Language 2', 'Gaelic Language for Native Speakers 1', 'Gaelic Language for Native Speakers 2', 'Gaelic Language 1', 'Gaelic Language 2', 'Introduction to Gaelic Culture 1', 'Introduction to Gaelic Culture 2', 'Modern Gaelic Literature and Culture 1', 'Modern Gaelic Literature and Culture 2', 'Modern Gaelic Literature and Culture 2', 'Celtic Civilization: The Early Insular Celts', 'Celtic Civilization: The Continental Celts'.

Introduction of new level 2 courses: 'Celtic Civilization: Classical Views on the Celts', 'Celtic Civilization: The Early Medieval Insular Celts', 'Celtic Civilization: The Later Insular Celts', 'Celtic Civilization: The Irish Sea World', 'History of the Celtic Languages', 'Introduction to Modern Irish 1', 'Introduction to Modern Irish 2', 'Advanced Gaelic Language 1', 'Advanced Introductory Gaelic Language 1', 'Advanced Introductory Gaelic Language 2'.

Withdrawal of courses: CE1014, CE1015, CE1016, CE1017, CE1019, CE1514, CE1515, CE1516, CE1517, CE1519, CE2007, CE2009, CE2010, CE2011, CE2507.

Curriculum Studies

Withdrawal of course: CR3504.

Divinity

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'South Asia: Religion, Politics and History'.

Education

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'Learning Teaching and Evaluation in Further Education (Online)', 'Teaching Learning and Assessment in Further Education (Online)', 'Understanding Literacies', 'Developing Literacies'.

European Studies

Withdrawal of courses: EU1003 and EU1503.

Environmental Studies

Withdrawal of course: EN1002.

Geology and Petroleum Geology

Introduction of new level 4 courses 'Elective in Research Techniques' and 'Advanced Study Elective'.

Withdrawal of the courses: GL409C, GL459C and GL459P.

Hispanic Studies

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Creativity in Hispanic Writing A'.

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Creativity in Hispanic Writing B'.

Key Learning

Introduction of new level 2 courses: 'Spanish for Advanced Beginners 1 (Spanish Language and Culture 1)', 'Spanish for Advanced Beginners 2 (Spanish Language and Culture 2)'.

Land Economy

Introduction of new level 4 courses: 'Estate Management (Level 4)', 'Planning Law (Level 4)', 'Property Portfolio Investment (Level 4)', 'The Changing Countryside (Level 4)', 'International Property Market Analysis (Level 4)', 'Economic Development and Regeneration (Level 4)'.

Withdrawal of the course: LE3026.

Land Management

Withdrawal of the course: LM3503.

Law

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Honours Roman Law (Sale)'.

Management Studies

Introduction of new level 3 course: 'Business Information Systems'.

Philosophy

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'Theories of Ideas in Early Modern Philosophy', 'The Limits of Thought', 'Theories of Extension in Early Modern Philosophy', 'Rationality and Religion'.

Introduction of new level 4 courses: 'The Ethics of Belief', 'Saul Kripke's 'Naming and Necessity'.

Politics and International Relations

Introduction of new level 3 courses: 'British Policy Process', 'Environmental Politics in the International Context'.

Introduction of new level 4 courses: 'Politics of Nationalism in the Balkans', 'Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian Foreign Policy'

Sociology

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'The Sociology of Peace Processes'.

Women's Studies

Introduction of new level 4 course: 'Researching Gender'.

Withdrawal of the course: WS2503.

(B) UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE AND DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Degree of Bachelor of Science

Withdrawal of Designated programme in Organic Agriculture.

Withdrawal of Honours programmes in Organic Agriculture.

(C) POSTGRADUATE COURSES

Divinity, History and Philosophy

Introduction of new level 5 courses: 'Postgraduate Fieldwork 1'; 'Critical Perspectives in Art History'; 'Postgraduate Fieldwork 2' and 'Biblical Exegesis: Selected Texts'.

Geosciences

Introduction of new level 5 course: 'Research and Planning Methods'.

Law

Withdrawal of the course LS5529

(D) POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Law

Introduction of a new programme: Pg Cert in General Law

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

880. The Senate approved, for its part, a proposal to establish a Joint Committee on Research Ethics and Governance (copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes), with the following remit and composition:

- Remit*
- (i) To develop policy and guidance on research governance and ethical issues.
 - (ii) To have oversight of all research-related ethical issues within the University and to ensure that appropriate structures are in place to encourage best practice.
 - (iii) To maintain an interaction with the Joint Ethical Committee of the University/GUHT.

Composition *Court*
A Vice-Principal (Convener)
Lay member of the Court

Senate
One representative nominated by each College
Director of Research of each College
Up to 3 co-opted members
One postgraduate student (nominated by the Students' Association)

LATEST DATE FOR THE RETURN OF EXAMINATION RESULTS 2004-2005

881. The Senate approved the latest dates for the return of examination results in the session 2004-2005, as under:

(a) January 2005 Diet of Examinations

- (i) Level 1 and 2 courses by Wednesday 16 February 2005
- (ii) Level 3, 4 and undergraduate Level 5, courses by Friday 18 February 2005
- (iii) Postgraduate taught courses by Friday 25 February 2005

(b) May/June 2005 Diet of Examinations

- (i) All Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses and undergraduate programmes by Friday 17 June 2005, except those in (ii) below
- (ii) MBChB and BSc Med Sci courses (years 2 or above) by the last date of the relevant Summer Term (i.e. Friday 24 June 2005 [year 2], 1 July 2005 [years 4 and 5], 8 July 2005 [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 2005, by Friday 17 June 2005
- (iv) All other postgraduate taught courses by Friday 24 June 2005

(c) August 2005 Diet of Examinations

- (i) Level 1 to 4 and undergraduate Level 5 courses by Wednesday 31 August 2005
- (ii) Postgraduate taught courses and programmes by Friday 21 October 2005

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

- (i) Phase II (3M): 25 March 2005 (1st attempt) and 29 April 2005 (resit)
- (ii) Phase III (3M): 3 June 2005
- (iii) BSc MedSci: 11 March 2005 and 2 September 2005

DATES OF TERMS

882. The Senate approved the Dates of Terms for 2005-2006 and, provisionally, those for the sessions to 2014-2015 (copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes).

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

883. The Senate approved the following appointments to University committees with immediate effect, on the recommendation of the relevant Heads of College, where appropriate:-

Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate):	Dr DW Hay to be Convener for 2004/05, <i>vice</i> Professor Burgess
Honorary Degrees Committee:	Professor Spracklen <i>vice</i> Professor Player
Museums, Collections and Galleries Committee:	Professor Gane, as Convener, <i>vice</i> Dr JG Roberts
Senate Undergraduate Academic Appeals Committee:	Dr WF Deans <i>vice</i> Professor Player

DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

884. The Senate approved the appointment of Dr PC Davidson as Director of Undergraduate Programmes (Engineering) with immediate effect until 30 September 2007 vice Professor Player, on the recommendation of the Head of the College of Physical Sciences.

USE OF ENDOWMENTS FOR BURSARIES, PRIZES, SCHOLARSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

885. Under Ordinance 455, the Senate has wide powers to utilise surplus revenue from endowments for bursaries, scholarships and fellowships, although in a small number of cases there is an issue of external patronage.

Senate approved the following, in order that the above powers could be fully exploited:

“That in accordance with University Court Ordinance No 455 (Aberdeen No 91), Sections 8 to 10, the annual revenue of Bursary, Scholarship and Fellowship funds which are in the patronage of the Senate, or alternatively which are not in the patronage of the Senate but to which the patron has made no presentation, be made available (in the case of bursaries) to the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service for the award of bursaries to deserving undergraduate students and (in the case of Scholarships or Fellowships) to the appropriate College or Colleges for the award of studentships to deserving postgraduate students.”

Senate noted that certain Endowment Bursaries were already utilised by SRAS for entrance bursaries and that the above would therefore represent a tidying-up of the current procedure. Other Endowments for Scholarships and Fellowships which were discipline-specific could also already be utilised by Heads of College. Therefore the main effect of the above proposal would be with regard to non-discipline-specific endowments.

Senate further approved the following:

“That, in conjunction with the Secretary to the University, Heads of College and Heads of School, a review be undertaken of current endowments for Prizes or Other Particular Purposes, with a view to ensuring that the revenue is fully and most effectively used, and that the administration of funds is devolved to the relevant College, where appropriate.”

As a consequence of the above, Senate also noted that the list of endowments for prizes and other particular purposes would be passed to the Registry for review with Schools/Colleges. If the endowment was in a subject area where the University no longer had any academic provision, the University may need to seek a change of use from the Court of Session but would seek advice of its lawyers to clarify if Ordinance 455 could be extended to cover prizes and other specific endowments.

AWARD OF ENDOWED PRIZES AND MEDALS 2003-04

886. Senate noted that the List of the Award of University Prizes and Medals for the session 2003-04 was available at www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/prizes.hti

UNIVERSITY STATISTICAL REPORT 2003-04

- 887.1 The Senate noted that the University Statistical Report for 2003-04 was now available and that members who wished to receive a copy should contact the Senate Office (extension 2039).
- 887.2 The Senate also noted that any member wishing to raise a matter on the Report for discussion at the next regular meeting should submit it, in writing, to the Academic Registrar by 5.00 p.m. on Monday 1 November 2004

NOVEMBER GRADUATION CEREMONIES

888. The Senate noted the following:-

- (i) that the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws would be conferred on Dr Winifred Ewing at a ceremony in the Mitchell Hall, Marischal College, on Friday 26 November 2004 at 11.00 a.m. In addition, First and Higher Degrees in Arts and Social Sciences would be conferred. The Chancellor would preside. Professor Flin would promote Dr Ewing. The Principal would deliver the Graduation Address.
- (ii) that the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws would be conferred on Mr Rae Angus at a ceremony in the Mitchell Hall, Marischal College, on Friday 26 November 2004 at 3.00 p.m. In addition, First and Higher Degrees in Science would be conferred. The Principal would preside and would promote Mr Angus. Mr Angus would deliver the Graduation Address.
- (iii) that the Honorary Degree of Master of the University would be conferred on Mr Derek Giles at a ceremony in the Mitchell Hall, Marischal College, on Saturday 27 November 2004 at 11.00 a.m. In addition, First and Higher Degrees in Education, Engineering, Divinity, Law and Medicine would be conferred. The Chancellor would preside. Dr Williams would promote Mr Giles. Professor Haites would deliver the Graduation Address.

GRADUATIONS *IN ABSENTIA*

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

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