

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

**Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2014**

*Present:* Principal, Professors Logan, Haites, Kunin, McGeorge, Morgan, Wallace, MacGregor and Ross, Ms AM Slater, Professors Morrison, Craig and Coyle, Mr M Whittington, Professor Baggs, Skakle, Soulsby, Guz, Lumsden and Schaper, Dr R Neilson, Dr C Kee, Dr J Masthoff, Dr K Shennan, Dr M Ehrenschtndtner, Professor Lurie, Dr D Hendry, Ms M Beaton, Dr P Bishop, Professor Dawson, Dr J Lamb, Dr WD McCausland, Dr C Brittain, Dr A Dilley, Professor Friedrich Dr DJ Smith, Dr Y Bain, Dr E Curtis, Ms S Cornelius, Dr G Sharman, Dr D Hanschel, Dr A Simpson, Dr L Bennie, Dr M Bain, Dr B Scott, Dr D Lusseau, Dr M Pinard, Dr S Fielding, Professors Galley and Heys, Dr L Aucott, Dr R MacKenzie, Dr S Duthie, Dr L Williams, Dr M Kashtalyan, Dr D Pokrajac, Professor Chandler, Dr L Philip, Dr A McLaughlin, Professor Norman and Mr R Henthorn.

*Apologies:* Professors Hannaford, Greaves Rodger, Zalewski, McCaig, Macrae, Reid, Davies, Wells Gow and Connolly, Dr S Lawrie, Professors Coghill, Mrs D Bruxvoort, Dr R O'Connor, Dr A Bryzgel, Professor Mealor, Dr D Robson, Dr T Wills, Dr K Groo, Dr T Burns, Professor Duff, Dr P Bernhagen, Dr R Vij, Dr M Mills, Professor Lambin, Dr J Sternberg, Dr A Carrington, Dr A Jenkinson, Dr I Greig, Dr D Scott, Dr J Barrow, Dr A Rajnicek, Professor Teismann, Dr S Tucker, Dr J Cleland, Dr A Denison, Dr LP Erwig, Dr J Hussein, Dr S Semple, Dr J Kyle, Professor Schwarzbauer, Dr K Khalaf, Dr M Cruickshank, Dr C Black, Dr D Pearson, Dr D Martin, Professor Sahraie, Dr J Keifer, Dr A Akisanya, Professor MacDonald, Dr F Guerin, Dr N Oren, Professor Hutchison and Edwards, Miss M Dunn, Miss Z McKellar, Mr T Balsys, Mr D Delelis, Miss HL Smith, Miss J Molyneux, Mr R Islam, Mr H Naio, Mr T Stephen, Miss T Womersley, Miss J Franke Mr M Amm Mr P McClenaghan, Mr A Swan, Mr S Gotsev, Miss L Nitsche, Mr S Adetola, Miss K Gombert and Mr B Amponsah.

The Principal welcomed Senate to the June meeting. The Principal paid tribute to Maitland Mackie who had been a member of Court for 20 years and most recently had been the Rector of the University. The Principal spoke of Maitland as an intelligent and inspirational man. He asked for a period of silence.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- 32.1 The Senate was invited to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2014 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minute). The minute was approved and there were no matters outstanding.

**STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL AND HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 33.1 The Principal advised that item 2, Statement by the Principal and item 4, Health and Safety would be merged. The Principal then thanked those who had completed the recent survey and stated that the initial results required analysis and that the full results would be released over the summer with an operational plan to Senate and Court in the autumn. There had been a small number of health and safety incidents and it was most important that everyone took care of themselves and of others.
- 33.2 He then reported on the equality and diversity agenda and that Professor Neva Haites was heading this up to ensure that the University met the equality and diversity best practice guidelines. The Principal said that there was some concern that not all staff had completed the equality and diversity online training. The Principal urged all colleagues to do this course.
- 33.3 The Principal then announced there was an important and exciting summer ahead as the University would be going live with the finance and student course selection aspects of OneSource. This would ensure that all students and staff would have a better experience.

- 33.4 The Principal moved on to Admissions and said that the number of applicants from Scotland and the EU were down but the quality of the applicants had risen. Numbers of RUK students had increased a little although they were mainly the same as last year and it would get tougher over time to increase the number of RUK students. The Principal said the University must have a package that was attractive to RUK students as well as to international PGT students. The International PGT student numbers were a little better this year. The Principal added that the University needed to improve the conversion rates so that more international students who were recruited were converted. The Principal said that Admissions were looking at opportunities for transnational recruitment and that there were plans especially for China, South East Asia, Africa and the US. The Principal added that it was being considered that international deans be added for the areas of India and South America. The Principal added that it was also important that Aberdeen students had more opportunities to go overseas. The Principal said the University should not be complacent.
- 33.5 The Principal went onto report on the Times Higher Review of Universities and that Aberdeen had done reasonably well but had not done as well on two components; Students' Union and having cheap shopping facilities on Campus. The Guardian review had put Aberdeen towards the top, with staff-student ratios being acceptable, though the University had come out low on retention and on student satisfaction regarding feedback. The Principal said that the University needed to work hard on the areas in which the University had scored low so that it would move up into the lower half of the top ten. The Principal continued by saying that MOOCS will continue to be very important for Aberdeen and that he was delighted with the progress made with FutureLearn.
- 33.5 The Principal finished by reminding Senate that the first graduation ceremony was on 7 July – later than in previous years. He said there were more ceremonies this year and he thanked everyone for the hard work put into them. He asked the Senate if there were any questions. There were no questions.

#### **BUREAUCRACY REVIEW**

- 34.1 The Principal reported on the Bureaucracy Review Working Group. The Principal said that a report had been produced for Senate and that the paper raised issues found by the Working Group. The Principal said that issues had been identified that would need to be debated in the Senate and with other colleagues and that there may be other issues that need to be raised. The Principal said that the action taken as a result of the paper would come back to Senate. The Principal invited the Convener of the Working Group to comment.
- 34.2 The Convener said that the Working Group had talked through the issues at length and that they had been complex and difficult. The Convener stated that the Group had recognised the difficult demands that had arisen as a result of change and that the Group was not about change but how the University goes about it. The Convener said the full report included summaries of discussions and subsequent emails and written comments, adding that there were three main areas that had been looked at: communications, the use of resources and infrastructure.
- 34.3 There then followed a discussion, the main points of which are summarised below.
- One member raised the issue of student monitoring and that most appeals were about C6s and C7s. The member added that any review of the C6/C7 mechanism could not be had just by the Teaching and Learning Committee but would need input from AUSA. The Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) agreed that this was not just about logistics and that AUSA was part of the overall discussion.
  - One member asked how the recommendations from the Bureaucracy Working Group would be implemented, imagining that some would be easy and others more complex and wondered how they would be delivered in practice. In response that it was said that each recommendation had an action point that there did need to be another paper including the operational plans.

- One member welcomed all the work that had gone into the Bureaucracy Working Group adding that some procedures in the University were innovation adverse and asked how we could make sure going forward we have systematic reviews of processes and procedures. In response it was said that the first recommendation of the paper was how do we do things better and we always need to be looking at new ways.
- One member asked if the SENAS procedure could be speeded up and in response it was said it was hoped that could be done with OneSource so that we could ensure that the University was assuring quality but also doing that quickly. Another member added that as part of SENAS one needed to respond to students' and examiners' feedback quickly so that small changes could be made to courses without waiting for the full round on SENAS. In response it was said that this was a very helpful comment and we needed to think through how this could happen.

34.7 In conclusion, Senate was reminded that a full paper would be brought back to Senate in October with full operational plan.

### **SFC FINAL GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT 2014/15**

35.1 It was reported that the Funding letter contained no surprises. Overall the sector is asked to secure efficiencies of 1% and therefore on the basis of an inflation assumption of 1.9%, core funding for teaching and research will increase by only 0.9%. As anticipated the University was losing the final part of the funding for RUK students. The letter confirmed that additional allocation of 300 places has been made permanent. The total grant for research was as predicted. Aberdeen received the third largest Research Excellence Grant. The Research Postgraduate Grant was dependent on the research student numbers and had decreased slightly. The Knowledge Transfer Grant was as predicted, with the Aberdeen share increasing.

### **PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF COURT**

36.1 The University has had to make adjustments to the size of its Court as a result of the Code of Governance. The number of student representative had increased from 1 to 2. Otherwise the Court had to be reduced because the recommended size is 16 or 17 and the University had a Court of 29, which was far too large. The new model would go to the next Court which is at the beginning of July. The number of Senate Assessors would stay the same. The Principal was the only senior member of staff and the Vice-Principals would no longer serve on the Court.

36.2 It was discussed that there had been an intense year of discussion and that Senate was sympathetic with the new model. There had been some concerns that the Principal was the only senior member of Senate on the Court but the University was wholly supportive of the increase in student representation on Court. Senate was also pleased that the six Senate Assessors remained, two from each College, and acknowledged that there needed to be independent members on the Court. It was considered that the absence of some staff will be workable because of the representatives of other staff on the Court. It was noted that if the new Court model was passed the University needed to ensure that the Senate Assessors represented the wider views of Senate at Court.

### **REPORT FROM THE UCTL**

The Senate approved and noted the actions taken by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning at its meeting of 14 May 2014, as under:

#### **1. Changes to General and Supplementary Regulations**

- 37.1 The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, and forward to the University Court, the draft Resolution 'Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees' (copy filed with the principal copy of the minute).

The Senate further agreed to ask the University Court that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 6 (2) of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, the draft Resolution be passed forthwith, so that the amended provisions may be applied with effect from date on which they are passed by the University Court.

## **2. Code of Practice on Assessment**

- 37.2 The Senate approved, for its part, minor changes to the Code of Practice on Assessment (copy filed with the principal copy of the minute).

## **3. Changes to the Procedures for External Examining Appointment, Reporting and Fees**

- 37.3 The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, the changes to the External Examiner Nomination Form and Annual Report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minute).

## **4. Term Dates**

- 37.4 The Senate noted, for its part, that the Committee had approved the Term Dates for Academic Year 2015/16. The dates of term are available at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/term-dates.php>.

## **5. Latest Dates for the Return of Examination Results 2014/15**

- 37.5 The Senate noted, for its part, that the Committee had approved the deadlines for the return of taught course and programme results in 2014/15 to be Friday 24 October 2014. This date is now included with those published at [www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/exam-results-and-change-of-marks-678.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/exam-results-and-change-of-marks-678.php).

## **6. Academic Support for Resit Candidates**

- 37.6 The Senate noted, for its part, that the Committee approved a proposal which requires that students taking resits as external candidates, who wish academic support and access to MyAberdeen, are required to register as Associate Students.

## **UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN MEDICAL SCHOOL, SRI LANKA CAMPUS**

- 38.1 The Senate noted the background information on discussions regarding the possible establishment of a University of Aberdeen Medical School in Sri Lanka (copy filed with principal copy of the minutes).
- 38.2 The Senate approved the delegation of its powers to the Senate Business Committee to take any decisions on behalf of Senate in regard to the development of a Medical School in Sri Lanka should they be required between now and the next meeting.

## **UPDATE ON ONLINE DELIVERY**

- 39.1 The Senate noted the update on online delivery and in particular the decision to use FutureLearn as a platform for the delivery of MOOCs (copy filed with principal copy of the minutes).

### **ONESOURCE STUDENT LIFECYCLE PROJECT**

- 40.1 The Senate noted the update on progress in regard to the OneSource Student Lifecycle project (copy filed with the principal copy of the minute).

### **SENATE ELECTIONS**

- 41.1 The Senate noted, for its part, that the following have been elected to serve on the Senatus Academicus with effect from 1 October 2014 to 30 September 2018 (except where indicated otherwise):

#### **Business School Constituency**

Professor R Buckland  
Dr A Sim

#### **School of Divinity, History & Philosophy Constituency**

Dr H Pierce  
Dr P Ziegler

#### **School of Education Constituency**

Dr A Halsall  
Professor P Stollery

#### **School of Language & Literature Constituency**

Dr J Biggane  
Dr A Lewis

#### **School of Medicine & Dentistry Constituency**

Dr S Fielding  
Professor M Helfrieck  
Dr A Vankatesh

#### **School of Medical Sciences Constituency**

Dr Delibegović  
Dr A Jenkinson  
Dr D Scott

#### **School of Psychology Constituency**

Dr D Ray

#### **Rowett Institute Constituency**

Dr N Hoggard (to September 2016)

#### **School of Social Sciences Constituency**

Dr T Argounova-Low

Dr A King