



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

UNIVERSITY COURT

CONFIRMED Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2017

PRESENT

Dr Frances Dow CBE (Chair)
Elaine Acaster OBE
Dr David Banks
Carolyn Bell
Jim Bradshaw
Dr Richard Butt
Colin Duffus
Dr Anthony Falconer OBE
Cynthia Guthrie
Frank Lennon OBE

Jackie Macdonald
Ken McGarrity
Miller McLean
Linda McPherson
Sarah Philips
Megan Richardson
Stewart Sands
Dr Eurig Scandrett
Dr Andrew Scott
Dr Laura Young MBE

IN ATTENDANCE

Professor Brigid Daniel	Dean of School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management
Professor Fiona Coutts	Dean of School of Health Sciences
Gordon Craig	Head of Planning
Malcolm Cutt	Director of Operations and Finance
Steve Scott	Director of Campus and Commercial Services
Irene Hynd	University Secretary (Secretary)
Gerry O'Hare	Governance Adviser (Minute Secretary)

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed members and those in attendance to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Professor Graham Caie, Margaret O'Connor and Professor Petra Wend.

2 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

3 DETERMINATION OF OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

(a) There was no other competent business determined.

(b) There was no business arising from the Items for Information.

4 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported on her attendance at the Committee of Scottish Chairs (CSC) meeting on 3 October 2017.

The review and revision of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance was now complete, and the Code would be published shortly. The final approved version had taken on board many of the concerns expressed through the consultation process. A fuller briefing would be presented to the December meeting of the Court.

The CSC had discussed the Scottish Government's ongoing Enterprise and Skills Review. It was clear that there were a number of issues still outstanding, including the manner in which the overarching Strategic Board would exercise its oversight of the subsidiary boards. The CSC continued to liaise with the Scottish Government in order to ensure that the SFC continued to have a strong voice and the necessary freedom to operate effectively after the formation of the 'super board.'

The Education Minister, Shirley-Anne Somerville, had announced the appointment of Dr Mike Cantlay OBE as the new Chair of the Scottish Funding Council. Dr Cantlay enjoyed a number of public sector appointments, including the current Chair of Scottish Natural Heritage.

5 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Members RECEIVED a detailed report from the Principal (COURT (17) 33) highlighting recent news and developments that involved or impacted upon the University.

The Court recorded its congratulations to those staff and students whose achievements had been highlighted in the Principal's report. Of particular note was the £3.5m grant awarded to the Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD) to promote health services in fragile settings. Particular mention was made also of student Iain Scott who had won the 'Outstanding Contribution from a Student' category at The Herald Higher Education Awards 2017.

6 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2017 (COURT (17) MINS 03) were APPROVED as an accurate record. In response to a request, it was agreed that one member's dissension with the accuracy of one part of the minutes be noted. Minute 10 below refers.

7 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 10: Portfolio Development

The Deputy Principal updated members on progress with the confidential proposals reported in the minutes. The Scottish Government had now opened discussions with another possible provider. A decision was on hold pending further consideration of the model and options for delivery. The University continued to have active dialogue with the Scottish Government, with a meeting taking place later in October. Given the slippage in the projected time-table, it was unlikely that any provision would be delivered before 2018/19.

8 FINANCIAL UPDATE

MINUTE REDACTED – the record of discussion under minute 8 is exempt from disclosure under Section 33 (1) (b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

9 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 9.1 The Court RECEIVED the fourth quarter report on progress against KPIs established for 2016/17 (COURT (17) 35). Members were advised that some financial indicators were being finalised as part of the detailed out-turn for 2016/17, and would be included in the final year end position being reported to Court at its meeting on 6 December.
- 9.2 Members discussed the decrease in overall satisfaction reported in the 2017 National Student Survey (NSS). Members were advised that the NSS Steering Group had put in place a number of immediate actions to address particular areas of dissatisfaction reported in the survey. School, programme and service area action plans were being finalised, progress on which would be monitored and evaluated by the NSS Steering Group, and reported to institutional committees, including the Student Experience Committee and the Senate. The impact of the results on the University's league table positioning was noted.
- 9.3 Members discussed proposed updated KPI targets for 2017/18. Members NOTED that the rationale for the update included the enhancement of links between institutional KPIs and the Strategic Plan, the removal of duplication and a refocus towards core areas of concern to the Court.
- 9.4 In discussion, there was a query from one member concerning the KPI on the %age of budget represented by staff costs, expressed in the paper as 60%. Members were advised that the percentage was a benchmark, and not a target, but the precise wording would be subject to further review. Further comments and points for clarification from members would be taken off-line.
- 9.5 Subject to the above, members APPROVED proposed KPI targets for 2017/18 as set out in Paper COURT (17) 36.

10 LAND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

MINUTE REDACTED – the record of discussion under minute 10 is exempt from disclosure under Section 33 (1) (b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

11 SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL

- 11.1 Members HOMOLOGATED the Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institutional-led Review of Quality (COURT (17) 38).
- 11.2 Members HOMOLOGATED the University Court Statement of Assurance to the Scottish Funding Council (COURT (17) 39).

12 GOVERNANCE

12.1 HIGHER EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) GOVERNANCE ACT 2016

Members RECEIVED an oral update on the University's compliance with the Higher Education (Governance) Act 2016 from the University Secretary. As reported previously, a number of amendments were required to the University's Statutory Instrument to reflect the

provisions of the Act. Such amendment would also need to take account of any new provisions established in the Revised Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance. Now that the Code Review was complete, and the Code publication date imminent, work would commence on the necessary revisions. Further update would come to the December Court meeting.

12.2 SCOTTISH CODE OF GOOD HE GOVERNANCE

Members RECEIVED an update on publication of the Revised Scottish Code 2017. The review was complete and the revised Code would shortly be published. On the basis of feedback received through the consultation exercise, the final Code was rather less prescriptive than earlier draft versions had suggested.

12.3 EQUALITY MONITORING

Members NOTED that, due to new requirements from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, equality data would be collected on all Court members. Members were advised that such data had been collected over recent lay member recruitment rounds, but further data collection was required as the data specification was not entirely aligned.

12.4 COURT EFFECTIVENESS - APPRAISAL OF CHAIR

At the conclusion of the meeting, Court Members met in private session, without the Chair being present, to appraise the performance of the Chair. A short report of the session, led by the Vice-Chair, and including all members present at the meeting, would be presented to the December meeting of the Court. The Vice-Chair would meet with the Chair and present the feedback, prior to the December meeting.

As an outcome of the discussion, members AGREED that an earlier meeting start time of 3.00 pm would assist the progress of Court business.

13 SENATE

Members RECEIVED the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 21 June 2017. Two specific items of importance had been drawn to the attention of the Court, namely, progress with the Portfolio Review and with preparation for Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR).

14 FINANCE AND ESTATES COMMITTEE

14.1 Members RECEIVED the minutes of the Finance and Estates Committee meeting held on 31 August 2017 (FEC (17) MINS 04). All matters brought to the attention of the Court had been covered elsewhere on the Court agenda.

14.2 Members RECEIVED the minutes of the Finance and Estates Committee meeting held on 26 September 2017 (FEC (17) MINS 05). All matters brought to the attention of the Court had been covered elsewhere on the Court agenda.

15 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Members RECEIVED the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 12 September 2017.

MINUTE REDACTED – the record of discussion under minute 15 is exempt from disclosure under Section 33 (1) (b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

16 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Members RECEIVED the minutes of the Nominations Committee meeting held on 25 September 2017 (NOM (17) MINS 03).

Members APPROVED the following Committee appointments recommended by the Nominations Committee:

- Sarah Philips to be appointed to the Health and Safety Committee.
- Ken McGarrity to be appointed to the Convenership of the Finance and Estates Committee. The appointment would be effective from April 2018, when the current Convener demitted office.

Members NOTED that vacancies on the Finance and Estates Committee would be considered in light of the outcome of the forthcoming lay court member recruitment round. Discussion on future membership of the Senior Management Remuneration Committee was held over.

Members NOTED, with regard to the recruitment of lay members of Court, that the Nominations Committee had agreed a shortlist of candidates for interview.

17 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Members RECEIVED the minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 20 September 2017 (HSC (17) MINS 03). There was one item brought to the attention of the Court. Members NOTED that, in light of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, Campus Services had conducted a risk assessment on the cladding of University buildings, the outcome of which had been shared with the Scottish Funding Council. The University's Health and Safety adviser also wrote to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, outlining the actions taken by the University to assess the risk of the cladding on its building. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service approved the approach taken.

18 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Court will meet on the following dates in 2017 and 2018:

6 December 2017
7 and 8 February 2018
4 April 2018
27 June 2018

With the exception of the Court Away Days, all meetings will begin at **3.00pm**