



CONFIDENTIAL

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2015

Present: Mr H Adam (Vice Chair & Acting Chair), Mr K Condron, Prof B Daniel, Mr J Dick, Prof J Donaldson, Prof J Gardner, Ms A Green, Mr S Haldane, Mr P Holmes, Ms K Howie, Mr A Kinnell, Ms L Marriott, Prof G McCormac, Mr R Murray, Prof H Nehring, Prof L Robinson, Mr A Sturgess

In Attendance: Ms K Bryson, Dr C Campbell, Prof M MacLeod, Ms K McCabe, Mr L McCabe, Mr M McCrindle, Ms J Morrow, Ms K Plouviez, Dr J Rogers, Ms E Schofield, Mr L Spillane, Ms F Wheeler (Clerk)

Apologies: Ms F Sandford, Mr S Anderson, Mr S Lewis, Ms L Marr, Ms B McKissack, Councillor M Robbins

The meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chair of Court in the absence of the Chair who sent on her apologies for being unable to attend the meeting.

The following were welcomed to their first meeting:

- Professor Jayne Donaldson (Academic Council)
- Dr Colin Campbell, Head of Policy & Planning

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members.

2. MINUTES

UC(15/16) Minutes 1

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2015 were **approved** as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising.

4. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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| (i) | The Finance Office's commentary on the Financial Statements | UC(15/16)13(i) |
| (ii) | The Financial Statements for 2014/15 as recommended by the Joint Policy, Planning & Resources Committee and Audit Committee. | UC(15/16)13(ii) |
| (iii) | Audit Highlights Memorandum from the External Auditors | UC(15/16)13(iii) |
| (iv) | The Letter of Representation from the University | UC(15/16)13(iv) |
| (v) | The Letter of Representation from the SURA | UC(15/16)13(v) |

Court considered the University's consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2015, having first been made aware that they had also been scrutinised in detail by the Joint Policy, Planning & Resources Committee and by the Audit Committee. It was noted that both committees had endorsed the statements

and recommended their approval to Court. The Audit Highlights Memorandum from KPMG, the University's External Auditors, provided an independent view of the accounts.

The fourth quarter management accounts had projected a surplus of £2,067k on operating activities. During the audit process there had been a few late adjustments relating mainly to SFC clawback (-£164k) and HMRC tax credits (£422k) and the net financial improvement initiative (NFI) (-£236). The final out-turn as per the management reports was amended to a surplus of £2,089k.

After year-end adjustments relating to pensions (£1,095k) and losses associated with the INTO Joint Venture (-£924k) were taken into account the reported surplus was £2,252k (2.1% of income).

Overall income in 2014/15 had increased by £1.9m over the previous year, among the factors affecting this were increased income from SFC and an increase in tuition fee income. Expenditure had also increased by £2.9m due to increased staff costs as a result of investment, an increase in depreciation charge and an increase in interest payable on credit used to fund the capital programme.

The balance sheet had strengthened during the year with fixed assets in excess of £106m. The cash position had also improved by £0.8m year-on-year.

The financial statements included a graph showing the surplus as a percentage of income over a number of years. This had shown a decline over the previous 5 years and surpluses were below the financial strategy target level of 6% of turnover annually. However, during this same period the University had made considerable investment to support the Plan for Academic Success (PAS) which had consequently contributed to the positive REF outcome. Investment had also been made in the physical and technological infrastructure and a steady improvement had been made in the University's net current assets position. Whilst it was not possible to model the position the University would be in if the surpluses had been retained and not invested, members commented on the success of the REF investment strategy.

Following discussion, Court **noted** the commentary on the Financial Statements, **approved** the Financial Statements for 2014/15, **noted** the Audit Highlights Memorandum and **approved** the Letter of Representations from the University and Stirling University Residential Accommodation Ltd (SURA) to be signed by the Principal on behalf of Court.

5. **KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT** **UC(15/16)14**

Court received a report on recent developments in the external environment and their potential impact upon the higher education sector. In particular it was noted that the UK Comprehensive Spending Review, the Nurse Review and the Green Paper – Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice were all UK initiatives that would have a knock on effect in Scotland. The University would be monitoring all these developments closely.

The Green Paper included a number of proposals such as the introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework, a new system for degree classifications, a new Office for Students. The proposals were at an exploratory stage and it was likely that some of the proposals would come to fruition, but others would not be progressed further.

The Scottish Government would be announcing the results of their own spending review on 16th December and it was anticipated there would be further cuts to Higher Education. When added to the efficiency savings that also had to be made, the cut in funding was likely to be significant. The sector was in discussions with SFC about which areas the cuts would impact but the outcome of these discussions and the effect on the individual institutions would not be known until a later date.

Court **noted** the update on the external environment.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2021 UC(15/16)15

Court considered the draft Strategic Plan 2016-2021. At a top-level, the Strategic Plan set out three core objectives that would enhance the *international* profile and position of the University:

- Be a top **25** UK university
- Increase income by **£50m**
- Further our research capability by **100%**

This was expressed as **25/50/100i**. In turn the objectives were supported by the enablers of innovating, connecting and transforming. The plan also covered four strategic themes of: learning and teaching, and the student experience; research with impact; partnerships and public engagement, and effectiveness and sustainability.

It was noted that there may be further minor amendments to the text as the printed and e-versions of the plan were finalised. The Strategic Plan would be launched in Spring 2016.

Court **approved** the Strategic Plan subject to minor amendments to the text.

7. ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

(i) Integration of Schools

UC(15/16)16(i)

(ii) Faculty Titles

UC(15/16)16(ii)

Court considered the proposals in relation to the integration of the Schools of Education and Applied Social Science, and the Schools of Health Sciences and Sport. The implementation of these changes would be done in three phases:

- The two new schools concerned would start working together on an integrated bases from January 2016.
- The titles of the integrated units would be confirmed in March 2016 along with consequential changes to the University's ordinances.
- The full implementation would take place at the start of the 2016/17 academic year. Estates and Campus Services would also consider options for relocating the newly formed units more closely together.

It was noted that the integration was being driven by the academic units themselves and would result in the creation of two new academic units which, along with the existing 3 academic areas, would create five academic areas each with a minimum of 1,200 students and around 50 members of academic staff.

A further proposal was considered to rename the academic units as Faculties and the heads to be called Deans. This was with the exception of the Stirling Management School which would continue to use the 'Stirling Management School' brand.

The Stirling Graduate School would also remain as a school pending the new Deputy Principal (Internationalisation & Graduate Studies) taking up post and considering the future development of the Graduate School.

During the discussion it was noted that:

- Changes would need to be clearly communicated, particularly to the student population.
- Government policy was increasing the integration between health care provision and social care provision and as a consequence there as an argument for integrating the Schools of Applied Social Science and Health Sciences. However, it was noted that from a practical point of view this was not particularly viable due to the sizes of these schools. In addition there were strong academic synergies between Sport and Health Sciences such as research into ageing, and there were also clear links between Education and Applied Social Science due to the professional nature of their programmes. The integrations proposed would not prevent academics continuing to work closely across the boundaries of the new faculties, but would achieve a balanced, critical mass in each academic unit.

Court **approved** the proposed integrations and the change to the titles of the academic units to Faculties to take full effect from 1st August 2016.

8. OUTCOME AGREEMENT UPDATE 2016/17 UC(15/16)17

Court considered the draft Outcome Agreement (OA) which would be submitted to SFC in December and was an update of the current OA submitted the previous year. The OA responded to new requirements to report more specifically on the gender balance of the student population and on care experiences of students. It was noted that further amendments would be required following the announcement of the Scottish Government spending review. It was **agreed** that the measures in the annex would be reviewed to see if any of the percentages could be expressed more clearly.

The final version of the OA had to be submitted to SFC by the end of February 2016.

Court **endorsed** the Outcome Agreement update for 2016/17 for submission to the Scottish Funding Council and **delegated** final approval to the Principal and Chair of Court.

9. INTO JV UPDATE Oral Report

Court considered an oral update on the INTO Joint Venture. An announcement had been made on 5th November regarding the closure of programmes at the London campus from 2016/17. The operation on Stirling campus continued to improve with numbers just short of the business plan targets for the first year. In addition a high proportion of the students would be eligible to continue their studies at Stirling and there were 20 nationalities represented within the 100+ students.

It was **agreed** that a paper would be brought to the next meeting of Court detailing the financial position and providing an update on student numbers.

Court **noted** the update on the INTO Joint Venture.

10. HR UPDATE UC(15/16)18

Court received an update on HR matters. It was reported that pay negotiations had concluded with an award of 1% on all spine points except points 1 to 8 which would

receive higher increases. It was reported that actions plans had been developed to address local issues that had arisen from the staff survey.

Court considered the proposals in relation to the Living Wage which had been uprated in November to an hourly payment of 10p more than the minimum pay rate used by the University which was £8.15 per hour. The potential trajectory of increases in the living wage over the coming years meant that the University would have to develop a longer term plan to deal with direct and indirect consequences of the increases. However, in the short term Court **approved** the addition of a temporary supplement to spine point 4 to deal with the shortfall in the minimum rate of pay compared with the living wage.

Court **noted** the two recent deputy principal appointments and the remaining items in the HR Update.

11. ACADEMIC COUNCIL UC(15/16)19

Court received an update from Academic Council from the meeting of 2 December 2015 and the annual report on committee effectiveness. The Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) had been completed in November and had resulted in an overarching judgement of 'effective' which was the best possible outcome. Court expressed their thanks to all that had been involved in the review. It was noted that the intake targets that had been discussed at Academic Council would be kept under review pending the Scottish Government spending review announcements.

Court **noted** the report from Academic Council.

12. JOINT POLICY, PLANNING & RESOURCES COMMITTEE (JPPRC) UC(15/16)20

Court considered the report from the JPPRC meeting on 24 November 2015. Members noted the discussion that had taken place at JPPRC regarding the expression in the Strategic Plan of the target surplus of 6% of turnover and that it had been agreed that this would be expressed differently. This had been addressed in the revised Strategic Plan approved by Court (minute 6 refers)

Court **noted** the report from JPPRC.

13. AUDIT COMMITTEE UC(15/16)21

Court considered the report from the Audit Committee meeting of 9 November 2015 and the annual report from the Committee. It was highlighted that the role of the internal audit process and the scrutiny by Audit Committee was to ensure, on behalf of Court, the effectiveness of the University's risk management, control and governance processes. The Committee had concluded that the Court had discharged its responsibilities satisfactorily for the year.

Court **noted** the report from Audit Committee.

14. EQUALITY STEERING GROUP PROGRESS REPORT UC(15/16)22

Court considered the report from the Equality Steering Group which highlighted a number of developments relating to equality and diversity activity. Biological & Environmental Sciences and Health Sciences had been awarded bronze departmental Athena SWAN awards in October 2015. A number of other departments would be making submissions during 2016. There were a number of ongoing training programmes for both staff and students.

It was reported that the University was represented on a cross-institutional working group considering the implications of the PREVENT duties introduced as a result of

the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act. Further staff training would be required to ensure the University complied with the Scottish regulations.

Court **noted** the progress report from the Equality Steering Group.

15. **COURT APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE** **UC(15/16)23**
Court **noted** the report from the Court Appointments Committee meeting of 28 September 2015.
16. **UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING STUDENTS' UNION ACCOUNTS** **UC(15/16)24**
Court **noted** the annual report and financial statements for the University of Stirling Students' Union for 2014/15.
17. **ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**
There were no items of other business.
18. **NEXT MEETING**
Court should **note** that the next meeting of Court is scheduled for 21 March 2016.