



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT
HELD ON 23 JUNE 2008

- Present:** Mr AG Simpson (Chairman), Mr H Adam, Professor ID Aitken, Professor R Ball, Mr MD Cullen, Dr KMA Dalyell, Professor R Evans, Mr PE Grice, Professor CM Hallett, Professor NH Keeble, Ms AS McAlindin, Dr R O'Connor, Mr G Pomphrey, Ms N Ring, Dr C Shankland, Mr T Spencer and Professor T Starrs
- In Attendance:** Professor S Burt, Mr KJ Clarke, Mr DA Cloy, Mr JS Gordon, Professor G Jarvie, Dr P Kemp, Dr J McGeorge, Ms K Plouviez, Dr J Rogers, Dr P Sinclair and Ms M Thornton
- Apologies:** Mr GDC Burns, Mr M McCrindle, Ms J Morrow, Mr RG Murray, Mrs A Servera-Higgins, Mr GM Simmers, Professor IA Simpson, Ms M Sweeney and Councillor F Wood

The Chairman welcomed Mr Tom Spencer (SUSA President) and Mr Mark Cullen (SUSA Vice President, Services & Treasurer) who were both attending their first meeting of Court.

The Chairman advised that Councillor Fergus Wood had replaced Councillor Margaret Brisley as Provost, and that Court looked forward to welcoming him at a future meeting.

The Chairman announced that this was the last meeting of Dr Kathleen Dalyell, whose term on Court as the Chancellor's nominee would end with the completion of Dame Diana Rigg's term as Chancellor on 31 July 2008. The Chairman extended Court's thanks to Dr Dalyell for her valued contribution to the work of Court and to Dame Diana for her excellent service to the University throughout her term as Chancellor and wished them both well for the future.

The Chairman announced that this was also the last meeting of Academic Council appointees Professor Ruth Evans and Professor Tommy Starrs and extended Court's thanks for their contribution and best wishes for the future.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman invited members to notify Court of any items of business in which they had an interest. No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTES

Court **approved** the minutes of the meeting of 17 March 2008.

3. MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising.

4. PRESENTATION: LEADING HEALTH & SAFETY

Ms Plouviez and Mr Duckett delivered a joint presentation on health and safety management at the University, outlining the external drivers and the University's approach along with an assessment of the effectiveness of this approach and the University's performance against objectives, highlighting areas where improvements could be made. The importance of the role of governing bodies in managing health and safety, for which they are ultimately responsible, was emphasised, and suggestions were made as to how Court's engagement with health and safety governance could be enhanced.

Court welcomed the presentation as a useful briefing on what it recognised as an area of great importance.

5. PRINCIPAL'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Principal reported on the following issues:

(i) The University had been named as Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence. SFC funding (of £500k for 2008-09 and 20 additional funded places) was attached. Discussions were taking place with the Funding Council to clarify the terms of the award. The Principal extended thanks to those who had contributed to the successful conclusion of the project.

(ii) The founding Director of Stirling Management School, Professor Roger Sugden, had been appointed and the School would come into effect when he commences his appointment in October.

(iii) The Joint Future Thinking Taskforce on Universities (JFTTU) was expected to produce an interim report by the end of June followed by a consultation period in July and August and publication of a final report in September 2008.

(iv) Her election as convenor of the Universities Scotland Research & Commercialisation Committee.

(v) The programme of 40th anniversary events had continued with an alumni reunion reception held in Greece on 14 April 2008, a staff party on 9 May, a reception in the Scottish Parliament on 20 May addressed by Jack McConnell MSP and a successful alumni reunion weekend held at the University on 20-22 June.

(vi) Professor Randolph Richards, Director of the Institute of Aquaculture, had received a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

6. 2008-09 BUDGET

UC(07/08)38(i)

The Director of Finance introduced the budget for 2008-09, which had been based on prudent but realistic assumptions on income and expenditure and judgements on the likely position based on recent experiences, and projected a budget deficit of £2.4m. Potential risks to the budget were highlighted, particularly the uncertainty on student fee income, research grant income and likely increases in utility and pay costs. On pay costs, the budget had made an assumption that the pay award for October 2008, which was linked to the September RPI figure, would be 4%, however there was a risk that it could be significantly higher than this. Given the deficit budget and the currently unknown cost of meeting the award, it was agreed to wait until October before confirming what level of award might be implemented at that time, taking account of the confirmed September RPI figure.

Discussion followed during which members emphasised the need to maximise savings in utilities costs and to further increase income. Thereafter, Court **approved** the proposed budget for 2008-09.

Strategic Plan Forecasts 2007-08 to 2010-11 **UC(07/08)38(ii)**

Court **approved** the Strategic Plan Forecasts 2007-08 to 2010-11, noting that the assumptions contained would see a stabilisation of the University's financial position and growth achieved within the planning period.

7. STRATEGIC PLANNING

(i) Draft Strategic Plan Overview for 2008-12 **UC(07/08)39(i)**

The Deputy Secretary introduced the Strategic Plan Overview, which Court welcomed. Following discussion, Court **approved** the Strategic Plan, subject to a number of minor points being incorporated.

(ii) External Context **UC(07/08)39(ii)**

Court **noted** the paper containing an analysis of the external context which had underpinned the development of the draft Strategic Plan Overview.

(iii) Key Performance Indicators **UC(07/08)39(iii)**

Court considered the revised set of University Performance Indicators which had been amended to take account of the discussion at Court Conference. Court welcomed the paper and **approved** the Key Performance Indicators, subject to a number of minor points being incorporated.

8. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

(i) Installation of Chancellor

Court **noted** that the date for the installation of Dr James Naughtie as Chancellor had been confirmed as 9 October 2008 and that the Chairman would be inviting the Chancellor to attend a future meeting of Court.

(ii) Charter & Statutes Review **UC(07/08)40(i)**

The Chairman introduced the report on the outcome of the consultation on Charter & Statutes reform from its Working Group, and outlined its proposals for changes to the University's Charter & Statutes, which Court welcomed. Discussion focused on the proposal to move the provisions of Statute 17 (the 'Employment Statute') into Ordinances (with the intention of taking forward full consultation and negotiation with the UCU and other campus unions on reform of that Ordinance at an early stage), and the recent letter of objection to this proposal which had been sent by the UCU to the First Minister. During discussion the following points were noted:

- The University had received legal advice confirming the areas where the Statute was not compliant with current employment legislation.
- The University had received legal advice from two firms of solicitors with expertise in the area of Charter & Statutes reform which confirmed that the consultation process undertaken was appropriate for the purpose.
- Informal consultation had been undertaken with the Privy Council on the areas for review identified by Court and informal discussions with senior civil servants supporting the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning had taken place whereupon the Cabinet Secretary's office had indicated that they were content for the University to proceed with its consultation on the areas outlined.

- Of the 20 Higher Education Institutions in Scotland, a minority (8) had this provision in their instruments of governance, as did a minority of UK HEIs.
- Many years of discussion on reform of the Statute at UK level, and three years of discussion at the Scottish level had not yet borne fruit.
- The University had an opportunity, within the context of its wider Charter & Statutes reform, to achieve what three other UK Universities had already done in repealing the Statute and embarking on modernisation of its provisions. In so doing, it would be better placed than other institutions in the same position to do the best by its staff and would be in the same position as the majority of other HEIs in Scotland.

Following discussion, a vote was taken on the Working Group's proposal that Statute 17 be repealed and its provisions moved to Ordinances. The Group's proposal was carried by a significant majority. Thereafter Court **approved** the report and the proposed changes to Charter & Statutes, subject to final approval of the revised instruments by Special Resolution at its October meeting.

(iii) Court Appointments Committee

The University Secretary reported on the current situation regarding Court appointments, highlighting the current vacancy for the Chancellor's nominee, ongoing efforts to identify areas of expertise required and the possibility of advertising to fill vacancies arising in the future. Court **noted** the update.

(iv) Court Conference

UC(07/08)40(ii)

Court **noted** the report of the Court Conference held on 24/25 April 2008.

(v) Appointment of Members to Committees

Court **approved** the delegation of powers to the Chairman to fill vacancies in membership of Committees including the Vice-Chairmanship of Court.

9. ACADEMIC COUNCIL

UC(07/08)41

Court considered a report from the meeting of Academic Council held on 4 June 2008 and **approved** (a) the Research and Knowledge Transfer Implementation Plan 2008/09; (b) the Knowledge Exchange Policies; and (c) the Space Utilisation Group report and recommendations (as recommended to Court by FIC) after noting Council's comments.

Court **noted** the remaining items in the report.

10. FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

UC(07/08)42

Court considered the report from the meeting of the Finance & Infrastructure Committee held on 2 June 2008, noting that its recommendation in respect of the budget had been considered earlier in the agenda.

Court **noted** the remaining items in the report.

11. STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

UC(07/08)43

Court **noted** the report from the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 27 May 2008.

- 12. AUDIT COMMITTEE** **UC(07/08)44**
Court **noted** the report from the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 28 May 2008 and further noted that Price Waterhouse Cooper's appointment as the University's Internal Auditors had been extended for one further year.
- 13. MACROBERT ARTS CENTRE**
The University Secretary reported that, following earlier Court approval, further assessment of the risks and benefits associated with incorporation was undertaken, which concluded that incorporation would bestow greater benefits on the MacRobert. Consequently the decision had been taken to incorporate MacRobert Arts Centre Ltd on 1st August 2008. Court **noted** the update.
- 14. STIRLING UNIVERSITY INNOVATION PARK: PURCHASE OF SCION HOUSE** **UC(07/08)45**
Court considered the paper on the proposed purchase of Scion House by SUIP and **approved** in principle the extension of the University's share of the risk of providing the guarantee to SUIP Ltd to 50% of £3.95m.
- 15. HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES CAMPUSES** **UC(07/08)46**
Court **noted** the paper from the Deputy Principal for Learning & Teaching.
- 16. ANNUAL SAFETY REPORT 2006/07** **UC(07/08)47**
Court **noted** the Annual Safety Report from the University Safety Adviser.
- 17. UNIVERSITY PENSION SCHEME**
- (i) **Appointment of Pension Scheme Trustees**
Court **noted** that the Chairman of Court, acting under delegated powers, had agreed to the appointment of Mr C Gordon as a member of the Pension Trustees from 1 May 2008 to 31 July 2010.
- (ii) **Pension Scheme Trust Deed and Rules** **UC(07/08)48**
Court **approved** the revisions to the University of Stirling Pension Scheme Trust Deed and Rules and **delegated** power to the University Secretary and Director of Finance to approve, on the advice of McClure Naismith, those changes which are a consequence of the core legislation governing pension schemes.
- 18. STIRLING MANAGEMENT SCHOOL**
Court **approved** a change to the Schedule of Ordinance 48 to establish Stirling Management School and dis-establish the departments of Accounting & Finance, Economics, Management and Marketing. This will be co-incident with the new appointment of the Director of the Stirling Management School.
- 19. DOCUMENTS SEALED** **UC(07/08)49**
Court **noted** the list of documents sealed.
- 20. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS** **UC(07/08)50**
Court **noted** the schedule of meetings for 2008-09.

21. COURT MEETINGS 2008-09

Court **noted** that regular meetings of Court were provisionally scheduled as follows:

20 October 2008
22 December 2008
23 March 2009
22 June 2009

22. ANY OTHER UNRESERVED BUSINESS

There was no other unreserved business.