University of Strathclyde

COURT

Minutes: 13th March 2007

Present: Dr A S Hunter, Convener of Court (in the Chair)
Principal, Mrs E J Currie, Mr J Fergus, Mr P Goldfinch, Mr D Gray, Councillor Dr M Green, Dr R M Harley, Professor G Hogg, Mr P Hughes, Mr R J A Hunter, Mr J F Livingston, Mr T J Monaghan, Mr C Moore, Ms K Morrison, Ms M McGee, Dr P MacKenzie, Dr A McLaren, Professor M Pacione, Professor A Paterson, Mr B Rennick, Mrs P Ritchie, Dr G Wilson, Mr M Wishart

Attending by invitation: Acting Vice-Principal Professor K Miller, Pro Vice-Principal Professor N Juster, Deputy Principal Professor R Condie, Deputy Principal Professor A Ferguson, Deputy Principal Professor J McDonald, Professor B L Furman (Dean of Science), Professor C Grant (Dean of Engineering) Professor C Harvey (Dean of Strathclyde Business School), Professor N Hutton (Dean of Law, Arts & Social Sciences), Mr I R M Smith (Dean of Education)

Attending: The Secretary to the University, Ms J Whitley (Deputy Secretary) Mr D Coyle (Director of Finance), Mr G Roddick (Director of Estates Management), Mr W Sutherland (Director Human Resources), Professor D Law (Librarian and Head of Information Resources Directorate), Ms S Hansen (Planning Officer – for item CM 3957 only), Mrs G McArthur (Court Secretary)

Apologies: Chancellor, Vice-Principal Professor J Love, Deputy Principal Mrs A Hughes, Ms F McMenamin, Mr M Strachan, Dr C Vance, Mr A Taylor (Director of Marketing & Communications)

CM 3955 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2007 were approved subject to the following amendment:

CM 3928 Strathclyde Business School Restructuring (Reserved item of business)

Delete: final paragraph
Insert: ‘On the recommendation of the University Management Committee, Court

RESOLVED that

i. the proposed staffing structure presented in the Strathclyde Business School Restructuring Plan be approved and be implemented in stages by August 2007;

ii a Redundancy Committee be established to oversee the process on behalf of Court, to make decisions on behalf of Court, and to make recommendations to Court under the terms of Statute XXIII, as required.
CM 3956   PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Court noted a report from the Principal which included the following information:

- The Principal and the Director of Finance had recently met with the Chief Executive of the Scottish Funding Council to discuss the University’s financial forecasts. The Principal was pleased to report that this had been a very productive meeting.
- The Principal, along with three other Principals from Scottish Universities, had attended a meeting of the Financial Services Advisory Board where there had been some discussion about the courses on offer and the research currently being undertaken in University business schools and how these could help in the understanding of risk.
- Dr G Reid of the DTI/OSI had recently visited the University to discuss technology transfer activities.
- Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal had visited the University to discuss the various projects that the University was running in Malawi.
- The Strathclyde Institute of Operations Management had recently been launched. This was the first academic institute of its kind in the UK which was designed to help businesses operate more efficiently and effectively.
- The Principal was pleased to report on the continuing success of University athletes and sports men and women.
- The Principal also reported on his recent successful visit to Mexico.

CM 3957   DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY STRATEGY (CM 3935)

.1 Strategic Plan

Court received the draft Strategic Plan for 2007 – 2011 which had been issued in advance of the papers for this meeting in order to give members sufficient time to read and comment on it before the meeting. In introducing this Strategic Plan the Principal emphasised the cultural shift that the University was aiming to achieve. The University had already embarked on an agenda for excellence in all its activities and particularly in research, education and knowledge exchange. It also wished to retain its vision statement, ‘The place of useful learning’. The Principal paid tribute to the efforts of all involved in producing this Strategic Plan.

Professor Miller, Acting Vice-Principal, presented the Strategic Plan to Court for approval. There had been wide consultation within the University which had resulted in significant support for this Plan and the excellence agenda. Various members of Court had responded to Professor Miller with points about the Plan. However, he was pleased to report that all of these points could be addressed either by some fine editing of the Plan, or in the planned phases of its implementation. Members of Court had indicated their support for the Plan and had asked for some parts to be more explicit, particularly in relation to some of the targets and the timescales for achieving them. Court also welcomed the emphasis on partnerships and working with others across all the activities that the University was engaged in. This ranged from working with the City Council and others in Glasgow, to national and international partnerships. Such high level strategic engagement would benefit the Scottish economy as well as the position of the University. It was considered that it might be useful to identify a few high level targets for the University in order to help monitor the performance of the University against its main targets set. This Plan was not just for the period to 2011 but was a guide to the way forward for the University and the type of institution it wished to be in the future. It was
noted that, if approved, then it was the intention to formally launch the Strategic Plan within the University on 3 May 2007.

In light of the above discussion Court

RESOLVED that the Strategic Plan 2007 – 2011 be approved in principle, subject to amendment in light of the comments received at Court and any comments emerging from the forthcoming meeting of Senate, and that the Convener of Court be delegated authority to approve the final edition of the Plan to be launched publicly on 3 May 2007.

.2 Implementation of Strategy

Professor Miller informed Court of progress with the implementation of the revised University strategy. As reported at the last meeting the Change Management Team and its sub-groups were continuing to meet on a regular basis to push this forward. Additionally the Strategic Investment Group had an important role to play in ensuring that all major proposals coming forward were consistent with the University’s strategy. It was the intention to launch an interactive web-site that would explain where the University currently was and what had been achieved so far. There were already clear signs about how the excellence agenda was affecting the University’s recruitment successes and its investment plans. Meetings with all Heads of Departments had now taken place which had provided clear feedback to the Senior Officers on a range of matters, including the identification of best practice and the identification of areas that required further review. The model for conducting these reviews would be similar to that used for the recent review of Computer and Information Sciences. All areas within the University would be required to produce strategy statements by the end of June. These statements would show how each area would align itself with the University strategy. Early areas for change had already been identified, these being: areas of duplication; a review of the budget-setting process; a review of the decision-making bodies and protocols; and streamlining of staff appointments procedures, including the appointment of Heads of Departments. The response from the University community to the revised strategy had been very positive and there was a commitment to the vision of the future as presented by the excellence agenda. The University was entering a new era where there would be significant change but which ultimately should result in the University being a better place to work and study.

In discussion members of Court indicated that they were keen to know more about the milestones that would be set to measure progress against the strategy. It was accepted that there would be both short-term and longer-term milestones which were currently being identified. The collection of data to inform the milestone setting process was still taking place and, once more information was available, then the milestones could be set with realistic timescales for achieving them. This would also affect the reporting processes within the University in terms of what information was brought forward through the committee structure. It was the intention that the implementation of the strategy and the change management process would become a standing item on the Court agenda for the foreseeable future. Court noted that representatives of the Funding Council would be visiting the University in May and the development of the strategy would form a large part of the agenda for discussion with them.

On behalf of Court the Convener thanked all members of staff who had been involved in the preparation of the Strategic Plan and in the implementation of the strategy. Their hard work and continuing efforts were much appreciated by Court.
CM 3958    FACULTY OF SCIENCE REPORT

Professor Furman, Dean of the Faculty of Science, presented the Faculty performance monitoring report. He informed Court that many of the challenges facing the Faculty in the previous session (2005/06) were still there, namely the Faculty still had a large savings target to meet; undergraduate recruitment was good overall but there were difficulties recruiting to specific subject areas (particularly Physics, Maths and Chemistry), and the undergraduate completion rate could be improved. However, Court was pleased to note that the Faculty had fared well in recruiting and retaining good staff. The Faculty’s financial position was such that it had a significant savings target to be achieved. However, steps were being taken to address this through a number of methods including a number of staff retiral in the coming years, an increase in research income and the recruitment of more overseas students. The Faculty was currently on target to exceed its savings target. The Faculty was also taking part in a number of research pooling initiatives, such as WestChem, SUPA (Physics) and, more recently, SULSA (Life Sciences). Others were currently being considered but these arrangements were not without challenges themselves. The Dean outlined the challenges facing the Faculty in the coming years.

In discussion the Dean informed Court that the Faculty intended to maintain its student numbers not only by maintaining its recruitment of home students but also looking at new markets such as Northern Ireland and increasing its overseas links. It was known that physics brought challenges in terms of student recruitment and it was queried if more could be done at the schools level to generate more interest. It was noted that the Faculty provided CPD opportunities in physics not just for industry but also for teaching. In considering pooling initiatives, the Dean confirmed that whilst these did bring challenges to the Faculty, nonetheless they also brought rewards. Working with partner institutions might dilute the University’s autonomy but did offer the opportunity to compete at a higher level than the University could achieve on its own.

On behalf of Court the Convener thanked the Dean for a clear and informative report.

CM 3959    GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT MATTERS: CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL

Court noted correspondence from the Scottish Funding Council on Governance and Management matters (circula r letter SFC/10/2007). This set out the Funding Council’s arrangements for meeting with new Principals and new Chairs of Governing Bodies.

CM 3960    THE DAVID LIVINGSTONE CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABILITY (SM 11091)

It was noted that the Faculty of Engineering had proposed that a research centre for sustainability be established within the Department of Civil Engineering. This Centre would aim to promote a programme of cross-disciplinary research and postgraduate teaching in sustainability with a focus on the environment, infrastructure and transportation. Court welcomed this initiative and, on the recommendation of Senate,

RESOLVED that the David Livingstone Centre for Sustainability be established within the Department of Civil Engineering with immediate effect.
CM 3961 PRIZES AND SCHOLARSHIPS (SM 11093)

On the recommendation of Senate, Court

**RESOLVED** that the final year David Hampton Prize be amended as follows:
‘that in accordance with the wishes of the donor, the allocation of the prize fund be made available to the Director of Music in the University of Strathclyde for use in promoting University-wide music’.

CM 3962 STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2005/06

Court received the Financial Statements for the Students’ Association for the year ended 31 July 2006. It was pleased to note that the Association had achieved a small surplus of £17k at the year end. The President of the Students’ Association informed Court that the current year (2006/07) was financially a more challenging year, with the income from commercial services being lower than hoped, although the Association was taking every effort to improve this situation. In discussion it was noted that there might be a future liability on the Association in respect of the pension arrangements of two members of staff employed by the Association. Court

**RESOLVED** that the Financial Statements for the Students’ Association for the year ended 31 July 2006 be approved as presented.

CM 3963 STATUTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REPORT

Court noted that the University Management Group had approved two specific recommendations made by the Statutory Advisory Committee on Safety and Occupational Health (SACSOH), namely:

i. Departments should appoint Fire Safety Co-ordinators whose role would be to help ensure that new legislative requirements were met and to provide a greater understanding of all relevant fire safety issues for each area;

ii. Section 12.4 of the University’s Health and Safety Policy be amended to make clear that human blood samples could only be taken by appropriately trained staff and studies involving the taking of human blood must be approved by the University Ethics Committee.

Court endorsed these recommendations.

CM 3964 EXTERNAL ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY IT FACILITIES (CM 3895)

Court was aware that the University Management Committee had established an Implementation Group under the Convenership of Professor Law to consider appropriate arrangements for relevant external individuals and groups to obtain access to University IT facilities. The Implementation Group had distinguished between ‘substantive posts’, whose post-holders would receive full access rights to the University’s IT systems; and ‘non-substantive posts’, whose post-holders would be eligible for staff access when relevant categories of person were carrying out *bona fide* duties for the University. ‘Non-substantive posts’ would be liable to a £50 charge per appointment, payable by the sponsoring department. Beyond this, other categories of short-stay visitor to the University could secure internet access through the payment of a £25 levy per application (although bulk discount rates would be negotiable for conferences and other similar
events if required). On the recommendation of the University Management Committee, Court

RESOLVED that

i. the ‘non-substantive post’ procedure for the relevant categories of persons carrying out bona fide duties for the University, as described above, be approved;

ii. a charge of £50 per non-substantive post appointment be levied on the sponsoring Department in order to secure appropriate access to the University IT facilities for the individuals in question;

iii. the costs of making arrangements to enable internet access for short-stay visitors be covered through a levy of £25 per application (noting that a discount rate may be negotiated for relevant conferences and other similar events).

Court noted UMC’s decision to draw the matter of Emeritus and Honorary appointments to the attention of the Senior Academic Appointments Panel in order to ensure that they too could secure appropriate access to University IT Facilities.

CM 3965 UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS MILLENIUM INSTITUTE (CM 3833)

Court was informed that the University of the Highlands and Islands Millenium Institute (UHIMI) had recently failed to secure degree awarding powers. In view of this the consortium of Scottish Universities that were assisting UHIMI in its attempts to secure full University status had agreed that a revised basis of practical support was required in order to help in this regard. The partner Universities (Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Strathclyde) were now being asked to take up membership of the UHIMI in advance of the award of such powers, rather than afterwards. It was the intention that taught degree awarding powers for UHIMI should be secured in the near future and that the partner Universities’ contribution should focus primarily on development of research capacity at UHIMI over an extended period of time. Court was now being asked in principle to agree to the request from UHIMI, and that authority for final agreement to proceed should be delegated to the Principal, following resolution of some issues relating to the request from UHIMI. These included:

• the possibility of strengthening the powers of the Title Management Group;
• the need for closer understanding of the prospective involvement of Strathclyde staff in the development of UHIMI’s teaching capacity, and particularly its quality assurance arrangements;
• UHIMI’s willingness, and that of the partner Universities, to accept a review of these arrangements after a suitable period of time with the option of withdrawal if taught degree awarding powers had not been secured by that time.

In light of the above and on the recommendation of the University Management Committee, Court

RESOLVED that

i. in principle, the request for accelerating the process leading to membership of UHIMI by Strathclyde (and the other partner Universities), be agreed;

ii. the Principal be given delegated authority to reach a final decision on this matter, in the light of the outcome of the pursuit of points outlined above;

iii. if it is decided to proceed, the Court nominees would be as follows: UHIMI Governing Body: Professor K Miller, Acting Vice-Principal Title Management Group: Professor K Miller, Acting Vice-Principal
Court noted that the University of Edinburgh had already agreed to this revised arrangement and, it was anticipated, that the University of Aberdeen would also shortly agree to this as well.

**CM 3966  RESEARCH ASSESSMENT EXERCISE: ADVICE TO HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS**

Court received a statement of advice to be provided to Heads of Departments with respect to dealing with potential issues that might arise following notification to staff about their provisional inclusion status for the next Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in 2008. This had been discussed with the relevant Trade Union (UCU) and at the University Management Committee (UMC). Additionally, Court received a tabled paper which provided a statement on staff inclusion/non-inclusion in the 2008 RAE. This statement had been revised in the light of comments made by the UCU and following discussion at the recent meeting of the UMC. It was the intention that this statement would be provided to individual members of staff through their Head of Department. On the recommendation of the University Management Committee, Court

**RESOLVED** that the advice to Heads of Departments and the statement on inclusion/non-inclusion in the 2008 RAE be approved as presented.

**CM3967  MID YEAR FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Court received the Mid Year Budget Review report which provided information on the University’s financial position at the mid year stage in relation to the agreed budget allocations for the current session. This report showed that the University’s financial position was better than had been expected due to a number of favourable variances. In total the favourable variances amounted to £3.283M. The Director of Finance informed Court that it was unlikely that the University would be in such a favourable position again in the foreseeable future (due to the impact the EDF would have on the University’s financial position) and that it should take advantage of this situation now. The University Management Committee (UMC) had considered this matter and had proposed how this balance could be allocated to benefit a number of areas within the University and to address a number of strategically important aims. Taking account of a number of specific additional expenditures amounting to £494k, UMC had proposed that the following areas should benefit as follows:

- Research Excellence Fund £265k
- Advertising costs £260k
- New Professors’ Fund £100k
- Pay Modernisation costs £ 69k
- Web allocation £ 50k
- USSA allocation £ 40k

Additionally, it was proposed that £575k should be set aside to support key strategic investments in Faculties; and that £850k should be allocated to cover the cost of relocation and upgrading of the McCance machine room for IT Systems. However, both of these proposals should be considered by the Strategic Investment Group first before recommendations for the allocation of funds could be considered by UMC. UMC had also agreed that the remaining balance of £580k should be allocated to the main budget holders via the standard University formula allocation, with a specific expectation that a
relevant portion of the allocated resource should be used in support of strategic initiatives.

On the recommendation of the University Management Committee, Court

**RESOLVED** that

i. the Mid Year Budget Review report be approved as presented;
ii. the above noted decisions of UMC regarding the allocation of the additional unexpected budget resource for 2007/08 be approved.

**CM 3968 ENERGY WORKING GROUP (CM 3870)**

Court welcomed the report from the Energy Working Group that had been established by the University Management Committee to look at possible ways of reducing the University’s energy consumption. The Estates Strategy Committee had also received this report and had welcomed its findings. This report contained some useful recommendations regarding improving the University’s energy efficiency and reducing energy consumption. It was hoped that these recommendations could now start to be implemented. Court thanked the members of the Group for all their hard work.

**CM 3969 ESTATES STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

Court received the report from the meeting of the Estates Strategy Committee held on 13 February 2007.

.1 **Building Condition Report (CM 3949; ESCM 68)**

Court was aware that a programme of works had been prepared to address the backlog maintenance requirements and that these would be brought forward at the appropriate time for approval. On the recommendation of the Estates Strategy Committee, Court

**RESOLVED** that Estates Management be authorised to proceed with the backlog maintenance works identified below at a total cost of £260k, with the funding being met from the Estates Development Framework. These works being:

- goods lift refurbishment in the Thomas Graham building
- fire safety improvements and cladding repairs in the James Weir Building
- fire safety improvements in the Architecture building
- roof replacement at St James Road
- fire safety improvements in the Smith building.

.2 **Stepps (ESCM 77)**

Court was pleased to note that planning consent to develop the University’s surplus land at Stepps had now been obtained and that the developer, Taylor Woodrow Developments (Ltd), now wished to finalise the purchase of this land from the University. It was anticipated that this sale would deliver a higher capital receipt than originally envisaged.

**CM 3970 STRATEGIC MARKETING ADVISORY GROUP (CM 3887)**

Court received a report from the first two meetings of the Strategic Marketing Advisory Group (SMAG). In presenting this report Mr Fergus informed Court that the Group’s main role was to improve co-ordination of marketing activities within the University in order that a more effective marketing strategy could be achieved. Improved communication within the University would be key to this and the Group would be
working closely with the Change Management Team’s sub-groups on communication and on systems streamlining in order to reduce duplication and improve effectiveness. There were a number of challenges ahead and the Group would be reporting to Court on a regular basis.

CM 3971 DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2007/08

Court noted the dates of its meetings for session 2007/08, as detailed in the file copy of the minutes.

CM 3972 MEMBERSHIP OF GENERAL CONVOCATION

Court

RESOLVED that, under the terms of Statute XII.1 (5) (b),

i. Dr Janet Brown, Chief Executive of the Scottish Qualifications Authority, be invited to continue her membership of General Convocation for a further three years until 31 March 2010;

ii. Ms Margaret McGarry, Head of Knowledge Transfer at Scottish Enterprise, be invited to join the membership of General Convocation for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2010.

CM 3973 AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Court noted that the Convener had approved the co-option of Mr R Crawford to the membership of the Audit Committee for the period 7 February 2007 to 31 July 2008. Court homologated this action.

CM 3974 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Friday 4 May 2007 at 10.00 a.m. Followed by lunch at 12.30 p.m. and General Convocation at 2.00 p.m.