MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT
1 May 2014

Present: Richard Hunter (Convener)
Principal Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Vice-Principal Professor Kenneth Miller, Ronnie Cleland, Dr Jack Perry, David Gray, Dr Archie Bethel, Gillian Hastings, Jeremy Beeton, Marion Venman, Niall Sturrock, Kwaku Adjei, Professor Niamh Nic Daeid, Professor Jim Fraser, Dr Veena O’Halloran (for Items 13-15), Professor Lisa Woolfson

Attending: Hugh Hall, David Coyle, Professor Tony McGrew, Professor Iain Hunter, Professor Susan Hart, Professor Scott MacGregor, Professor David Littlejohn, Sandra Heidinger, Simon Jennings, Ray McHugh, Stella Matko, Dr Stuart Brough, Dr Steve Graham, Dr David McBeth, Dr Lewis Allan

Apologies: Robin Crawford, Dr Jane Morgan, Margaret McGarry, Dr Rose-Mary Harley, Councillor Stephen Curran, Professor James Thomson, Roza Salih

Welcome and apologies

The Convener noted apologies. There were no declarations of interest.

1. Minutes

The minute of the meeting on 5 March 2014 was approved.

2. Matters arising

The Convener congratulated the Student President for the NUS Scotland awards of Student Union of the Year and Staff Achievement of the Year for Carole McGreish.

3. Principal’s Report

The Principal provided an update on the following key activities since the March meeting, with a report to follow at the June meeting:
- Membership of CBI Scotland
- Glasgow City Deal
- Recruitment of a new Vice-Principal and Executive Dean of Science
- Bloomberg Future of Energy Summit (New York, April 2014)
- Science Without Borders
- Industrial action

4. National Physical Laboratory update

The Chief Operating Officer thanked members for their participation in the 16 April special meeting to agree the bid documentation. It was noted that the bidding group will meet the assessors in mid-May, with Court to receive an update following the meeting.

5. Revised Schedule of Delegated Authority and Statement of Primary Responsibilities

Court considered revisions to the Schedule of Delegated Authority and Statement of Primary Responsibilities, following recommendation by Court Business Group. It was noted that the revised
Schedule increases financial decision making authority within defined limits for a number of senior University committees. An anomaly between the proposed delegated authority for property transactions (up to £2M) and investments in spin-out companies (up to £2.5M) was discussed.

Court approved the revised Schedule of Delegated Authority and Statement of Primary Responsibilities, to take effect from 1 August 2014 – subject to the delegated authority for property transactions and investments in spin-out companies to be set at a consistent level by Senior Officers.

[Secretary’s note: Senior Officers have considered further and agree to set the delegated authority level at a consistent level of up to £2.5M for both property transactions and investments in spin-out companies.]

6. Review of Court Business Group

Court received a review of the remit and composition of Court Business Group (CBG), following consideration and endorsement of the review’s recommendations by CBG. Court noted the role of CBG within the University’s governance structure and the benefits brought by its work to refine Court papers, particularly those of a strategic or financial nature.

Court approved, with effect from 1 August 2014:

i) an increase in delegated authority for CBG to authorise items of non-recurrent spending of up to £2.5M not already within the Court approved budget and investments in spin-out companies of up to £2.5M (included with the Schedule of Delegated Authority)

ii) a revised composition of CBG to include one appointed staff member of Court

iii) the terms of reference and updated composition of CBG be included in the University Regulations

7. Governance Code implementation: update

Court noted an update on the implementation of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance. It was agreed that a process to hold a pre-meeting of Court without the Convener present in 2014-15 will be finalised before the end of the current academic year.

The following committee reports were noted by Court:

8. Senate
9. Executive Team
10. Court Business Group
11. Court Membership Group

Court approved the recommendation that one staff member of Court be added to the composition of Court Membership Group, with effect from 1 August 2014.

12. Audit Committee

Court approved the recommendation that the terms of reference of the committee be revised in Regulations to include:

1.2.7 (c) To review and implement policy on the engagement of the external auditor to supply non-audit services, taking into account relevant ethical guidance regarding the provision on non-audit services by the external audit firm;

The following committee reports were noted by Court:

13. Staff Committee
14. Estates Committee
15. Any other business

Court discussed the importance of sport to the student experience at the University and agreed that the November Strategy Session should include an update on sporting activities and facilities, with input from student representatives. Court noted the excellent support provided by academic staff to student athletes.

The annual Court dinner, to take place on the evening of 26 June, was advertised to members.

Date of next meeting

– Wednesday 25 June, 14.00 – 16.30, Court/Senate Suite, Collins Building

LA, 8 May 2014