MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT  
21 November 2013

Present: Richard Hunter (Convener)
Principal Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Vice-Principal Professor Kenneth Miller, Dr Jack Perry, Robin Crawford, David Gray, Dr Archie Bethel, Gillian Hastings, Margaret McGarry, Dr Jane Morgan, Niall Sturrock, Kwaku Adjei, Roza Salih, Professor Niamh Nic Daeid, Professor Jim Fraser, Dr Veena O’Halloran, Professor Lisa Woolfson, Professor James Thomson

Attending: Hugh Hall, David Coyle, Professor Tony McGrew, Professor Iain Hunter, Professor Susan Hart, Professor Scott MacGregor, Professor Val Belton, Professor Colin Grant, Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Sara Carter, Professor David Littlejohn, Sandra Heidinger, Simon Jennings, Ray McHugh, Virginia Beckett, Lewis Allan

Apologies: Ronnie Cleland, Jeremy Beeton, Marion Venman, Councillor Stephen Curran, Dr Rose Mary Harley

Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed attendees to Ross Priory.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 26 September 2013 were approved.

2. Matters arising

The Vice-Principal provided an update on the industrial action of 31 October and further action scheduled for 3 December by the University and College Union, Unison, Unite and the Educational Institute of Scotland (3 December only) in response to a UK-wide 1% pay offer for university staff.

The Convener reminded members to submit declarations of interest to the Governance Manager.

3. Principal's Report

The Principal provided updates on the following key activities since the September meeting:
- Ministerial letter of guidance to the Scottish Funding Council
- Sector-wide political engagement on future research funding
- Positive feedback on the Outcome Agreement 2012-13 self-evaluation report
- Engagement with UK and Scottish government representatives
- International engagements - including key-note speech at the Science and Technology in Society conference and meeting with business leaders in Japan
- Major research projects, initiatives and funding awards

Court congratulated undergraduate students Alasdair MacPhee and Ainslie McCabe on their respective awards of Young Gaelic Ambassador of the Year 2013 and General Teaching Council of Scotland’s George D. Gray prize for the best undergraduate thesis in teacher education in Scotland.
4. Financial Statements 2012-13

The draft Financial Statements for 2012-13 were presented to Court. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) provided a commentary on the statements, describing factors underpinning the surplus (£8.4M including an operating surplus of £6.6M), income growth (18% increase in research grants and contracts with a longer-term trend of a 40% increase in research income from 2008 to 2013) and staff costs as a percentage of income (decline from 59% to 55%, moving closer to the sector average of 53%). The CFO highlighted the importance of growing non-governmental income, current and future investments in strategic staffing appointments, physical/IT infrastructure and the University’s ability to resource major investments and pursue new opportunities such as a combined heat and power district energy network.

The Treasurer commented on the positive external auditor’s report, likely future changes in the treatment of pension liabilities and their impact on the University’s financial statements, the accounting treatment of the insurance proceeds relating to the James Weir fire, earlier than anticipated expenditure on the James Weir building and European Investment Bank funding.

The Convener of the Audit Committee commented on the recent internal audit review of Faculties, noting the speed and constructive response by Strathclyde Business School to address issues identified as a result of the most extensive review yet undertaken.

Court approved the draft Financial Statements 2012-13 as recommended by Audit Committee and congratulated the Executive Team for the strong financial performance set out in the statements.


Court received the Quarter 1 Business Report for 2013-14 and the first progress report against the 22 measures in the University's Performance Measurement Framework (PMF).

The Chief Financial Officer provided an overview of the Business Report, noting that Executive Team budget-holders will develop further proposals to meet the operating surplus projected in the 2013-14 Budget. Court noted the unexpected increase in costs of the James Weir project owing to earlier than anticipated expenditure.

Court considered the Performance Measurement Framework progress report, noting the high level of ambition shown in the University’s Outcome Agreement and PMF. It was suggested that measures tracked by the Scottish Funding Council should be highlighted and the number of students gaining an international experience included. Court welcomed the improvements in reporting brought about by the Business Report and PMF progress report.

6. Draft 2014-17 Outcome Agreement

The current draft of the University’s 2014-17 Outcome Agreement was presented to Court. The approach to drafting the new three year format and additional areas for inclusion were noted. The inclusion of the University’s commitment to full compliance with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance was suggested, as well as an emphasis on the University’s integration of employer engagement, knowledge exchange, education and research. The Executive Team were authorised to refine the text and targets further, prior to a submission of the required ‘well developed draft’ on 29 November 2013.

7. Convener’s Actions

Court homologated the actions outlined in the report to:

- Approve the change of name of the School of Applied Social Sciences to the School of Social Work and Social Policy within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Confer the title of Emeritus Professor upon Lord Hope of Craighead – recommended by the Vice-Principal on behalf of the Senate.
8. **Corporate Risk Register**

Court considered and **endorsed** the selection of top risks and mitigating actions in the Corporate Risk Register, recommended by Audit Committee.

9. **Estates: Combined Heat and Power**

Court considered a request to approve investment in a Combined Heat and Power and District Energy Network, recommended by Estates Committee following approval of the business case. The combined funding from the Scottish Funding Council, short estimated payback period, the likely location and estimated build time were noted. Court **approved** the £8.2 million investment.

10. **Court Calendar: 2014-15 dates**

The scheduled dates of Court meetings for the 2014-15 academic year were presented to Court.

11. **2014 Celebrations: update**

Court noted an update on University proposals to celebrate 50 years since the granting of the Royal Charter.

12. **Governance code implementation update**

Court noted an update on University plans to implement the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

The following reports were noted by Court:

13. **Senate Report**
14. **Executive Team**
15. **Court Business Group**

16. **Audit Committee and Audit Committee Annual Report to Court 2012-13**

Court **approved** relevant officers be authorised to sign the printed Financial Statements for 2012-13 and that Ernst & Young LLP be retained as the University’s External Auditors for the audit of the Financial Statements for 2013-14.

17. **Staff Committee**

Court noted the report.

18. **Any other business**

There was no other business.

**Date of Next Meeting**

- The next meeting of Court will take place on Thursday 27 February 2014 in the Scottish Enterprise Inovo building, 121 George Street.

LA, 2 December 2013