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- In the Chair: Professor Richard A Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor
- Present Also: Professor Julian Jones, Vice-Principal
Professor Robert Craik, Vice-Principal (Malaysia)*
Professor Ammar Kaka, Vice-Principal (Dubai)*
Professor Duncan Hand, Interim Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange)
Professor Gill Hogg, Deputy Principal (External Relations)
Professor John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)
Professor Gavin Gibson, Interim Head (Mathematics and Computer Sciences)
Mr Alick Kitchin, Acting Head, (Edinburgh Business School)*
Professor Robert MacIntosh, Head (Management and Languages)
Professor Stephen McLaughlin, Head (Engineering and Physical Sciences)
Professor Gareth Pender, Head (Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society)
Professor Fiona Waldron, Head (Textiles and Design)
Ms Ann Marie Dalton, Secretary of the University
Mr Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance
- In Attendance: Mr Richard McGookin, Director of Planning
Mr Mark Adderley, Director of Human Resources Development
Mr Paul Travill, Academic Registrar
Mr Brett Dodgson, Clerk
- Apologies: Dr Peter Morris, Interim Head (Life Sciences)

* Indicates member participating remotely

MINUTE REF

M16/018 WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed to the meeting the members of the UE and those colleagues who were in attendance.

The UE noted those members who had submitted to the Clerk their apologies for the meeting.

M16/019 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The UE received a verbal report from the Principal on his visit to the Malaysia campus. The Principal thanked the Vice-Principal (Malaysia) and other colleagues at the Malaysia campus for arranging the visit which had provided opportunities for the Principal to meet with the University's staff and students in Malaysia, representatives of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, and the leaders of other universities in Malaysia. The UE noted that the Principal had also met with the Malaysian High Commissioner to the UK to discuss the planned Malaysia Year of Higher Education which would be launched at the Malaysia campus and at Imperial College London.

M16/020 SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES REORGANISATION: PROPOSALS [Paper UEP/16/012]

The UE considered a report on proposals to reorganise the academic activities of the School of Life Sciences. The UE noted that the proposals would be presented to the Senate at its meeting 27 January 2016 and that, subject to the proposals receiving the endorsement of the Senate, they would then be presented to the Court for approval.

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The UE noted the proposals set out in the paper and agreed that:

1. both the Senate and the Court should be assured that a full communications plan had been prepared and was in place to ensure that staff and students would be kept informed as to the immediate and longer-term implications of the reorganisation;
2. the findings of the review conducted by the Deputy Principal (External Relations) should be used to provide the context for the proposals – in particular, that the School in its current form was unable to deliver the quality of student experience or intensity of research demanded by the University's strategic plan; it was agreed that a summary of the findings of the review should be provided to members of the UE for reference;
3. it should be clear as to how the success of the proposals would be measured – in the short-term, this would be the embedding of staff in new research institutes/groupings and improvements in the student experience; in the longer-term, this would be the extent to which operational issues that had been identified in the review conducted by the Deputy Principal (External Relations) such as growth in research income and the removal of barriers to interdisciplinary collaborations had been achieved;
4. the integration of the School's staff into new research institutes/groupings would need to be carefully managed and monitored and that the relevant Heads of Schools would need to ensure that the leaders of those research institutes/groupings understood their role in the delivery of the reorganisation and who they could approach for guidance if needed; and
5. the reorganisation could give rise to questions as to the University's broader academic strategy and that, at a future meeting, the Senate should be invited to consider the University's overall academic vision and future plans.

M16/021

RESEARCH AWARDS AND PROPOSALS: DECEMBER 2015 [Paper UEP/16/013]

The UE considered analyses of research awards and proposals as at December 2015. The UE noted that it had received the analyses at its previous meeting [minute 16/015] but that these were being presented again as a starting point for a broader discussion on developing research performance and the management information needs associated with this.

The UE noted the analyses and agreed that:

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]

1. the Deputy Principal (Knowledge and Research Exchange), the Director of Planning, and the Director of Research and Enterprise Services should in February 2016 lead a further discussion on:
 - a. proposals for enhanced reporting of research performance measures ensuring that such reports facilitated the UE's management of awards and proposals volumes and provided a level of granularity needed to support discussions within Schools;
 - b. mechanisms of data collection and reporting which facilitate a shared understanding of what the data says;
 - c. how to articulate what good looks like in the context of research performance and how this would vary across disciplines and on the experience of the individual researcher; and
 - d. overcoming sensitivities to the use of research performance data in Personal Development Reviews and promotions rounds.

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M16/022 STUDENT MENTORING

The UE considered a presentation on student mentoring. The UE noted that it was proposed to develop the University’s student mentoring scheme in order to improve its effectiveness and support improved retention and completion rates.

The UE noted the proposals set out in the paper and agreed that:

1. the University’s student mentoring scheme should be developed as proposed including its renaming as “personal tutoring”;
2. the change from the term “mentor” to “personal tutor” better articulated that, primarily, staff in this role provided academic rather than pastoral support but that it would therefore be important to ensure that students were directed to other support services as needed;
3. use should be made of student records data to identify students from groups known to have lower completion rates – for example, in the allocation of students to personal tutors or in the targeting of advice and support;
4. there was a need to balance appropriate variations in approach between Schools against the need for consistency in the standards of personal tutor support;
5. consideration should be given as to whether week 4/5 would be too late for an initial meeting between students and their personal tutors and whether use could be made of non-intrusive early warning systems – such as identifying students who had not accessed the University Library by that point;
6. consideration should be given as to the training and support needs of personal tutors, whether such training should be compulsory for all personal tutors, whether periodic refresher training might be needed, and when training might be delivered each year;
7. the University’s expectations of personal tutors should be clearly articulated but that further consideration should be given as to whether awards-based recognition of mentors was needed; and
8. the value of contacts between students and personal tutors was likely to be enhanced if personal tutors understood the purpose for which they were being contacted and that consideration should be given to facilitate this.

M16/023 UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE TEAM OBJECTIVES [Paper UEP/16/014]

The UE considered a proposal to set shared objectives for its members. The UE noted that the objectives had been proposed in the spirit of gaining a collective understanding and professional challenge rather than as a compliance mechanism.

[Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]

M16/024 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that its next meeting would be held 1 February 2016.

Signed by Chair

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Date