

Heriot-Watt University

THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

Minutes: 4 April 2016

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)
Mr Alick Kitchin, Acting Head (Edinburgh Business School)*
Professor Robert MacIntosh, Head (Management and Languages)
Professor Stephen McLaughlin, Head (Engineering and Physical Sciences)
Dr Peter Morris, Interim Head (Life Sciences)
Professor Beatrice Pelloni, Head (Mathematics and Computer 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
Dr Alicia Greated, Director of Research and Enterprise Services
Mr Paul Travill, Academic Registrar
Mr Brett Dodgson, Clerk

* Indicates member participating remotely

MINUTE REF
M16/118

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

M16/119

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES UNION: BALLOT FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The UE received a verbal report on possible industrial action by the Universities and Colleges Union.

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

The UE agreed that the Student Union should be advised of the possibility of industrial action. It was agreed that contingency plans for implementation should the Universities and Colleges Union proceed to industrial action should be prepared and presented to the UE as needed.

M16/120

“THINKING ABOUT OUR FUTURE” DIALOGUE

The UE received a verbal report on plans to open a strategic conversation with members of the University.

It was noted that a series of open meetings for all staff would be hosted by the Principal starting later in April 2016. It was intended that the first of these meetings would be held at the Malaysia campus and that further meetings would be held at all of the University's campuses. The meetings were designed to provide forums for a conversation about developing the University's

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

vision for the future and enhancing its distinctiveness. Alongside these meetings the Principal would also be contributing a number of written discussion pieces for publication in the staff email newsletters. The initiative would be communicated under the title "Thinking About Our Future". It was noted that the Principal would circulate briefing notes on the initiative to members of the UE.

M16/121 STUDENT ADMINISTRATION REVITALISATION PROGRAMME

The UE considered a presentation on the Student Administration Revitalisation Programme.

It was noted that the Programme was a collection of projects through which key academic administration business processes would be reviewed and modernised. It was intended that the Programme would, over the next three to four years, look at all stages of the student "lifecycle" from enquiry through to graduation. The Programme was intended to lead to processes which would be appropriate for all Schools and campuses and which were aligned with the developing business needs of the University.

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

It was noted that a key objective of the Programme was to deliver greater efficiency by eliminating labour intensive processes and manual workarounds. The UE agreed that it was important that the Programme Board did not lose sight of that objective.

It was noted that the UE had approved funding for the initial projects within the Programme [minute 15/174] and that progress with later projects would be dependent on the approval of further funding. The UE agreed that further funding for the Student Administration Revitalisation Programme should be considered in future planning rounds.

M16/122 TAUGHT DEGREE APPLICATION TURNAROUND TIMES (SCOTTISH CAMPUSES) [Paper UE/16/079]

The UE considered a proposal to introduce maximum turnaround times for the processing of applications to taught degree programmes at the Scottish campuses.

It was noted that turnaround times could vary significantly between different programmes, different Schools, and different campuses. Shorter turnaround times were expected to support efforts to improve applicant conversion rates and it was noted that a number of UK universities had introduced maximum turnaround times for student applications.

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

The UE agreed that a maximum turnaround time for applications to research degree programmes should be considered at a future date.

M16/123 STUDENT RETENTION STRATEGY, OPERATIONAL PLAN, AND SCHOOL PLANS [Paper UE/16/080]

The UE considered the Student Retention Strategy, the associated Operational Plan, and the School Student Retention Action Plans for 2015-16.

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

The UE agreed that the Learning and Teaching Board should consider the value of including within the Operational Plan the additional components which had been suggested. It was agreed that the Plan should also include a summary of the practical and resource implications arising from the delivery of each component. The UE agreed that it should consider the updated Operational Plan at a future meeting.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

It was noted that, alongside the Student Retention Strategy, the Learning and Teaching Board had approved a new graphic to illustrate the University's Graduate Attributes. The attributes applied to graduates of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and were designed to ensure that a Heriot-Watt University graduate was readily identifiable and distinct from the graduates of other universities.

M16/124 RESEARCH PERFORMANCE REPORTING [Paper UE/16/081]

The UE considered proposals for developing the University's research performance reporting capability.

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

M16/125 SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES: REORGANISATION OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STAFF [Paper UE/16/082]

The UE considered the final report of the working group which had been convened to consider the reorganisation of professional services staff from the School of Life Sciences following the decision of the Court in March 2016 to disestablish the School.

It was noted that the working group had proposed that professional services staff from the School of Life Sciences should be reorganised within the School of Management and Languages, the School of Engineering and Physical Sciences, the School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society, and central services. The proposed reorganisation would be cost-neutral and would cover all of the existing professional services posts within the School of Life Sciences. It would therefore be consistent with the University's commitment that the reorganisation should not result in compulsory redundancies.

The UE approved the reorganisation of professional services staff from the School of Life Sciences and the distribution of positions within the receiving Schools and central services as proposed by the working group.

M16/126 CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUNDING [Paper: UE/16/083]

The UE considered the final report of the financial task and finish group which had considered options relating to the funding of the University's current capital investment programme.

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

M16/127 2016 FIVE YEAR PLAN

The UE considered a presentation on the current planning round and the development of an initial iteration of the 2016 Five Year Plan.

It was noted that budget owners had submitted their draft plans and that these had been used to prepare a provisional synthesis.

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

The UE agreed that budget holders should prepare and submit the final versions of their plans and that, through the current planning round, work should continue to verify the assumptions behind those plans and to build confidence in the forecasts for all years of the 2016 Five Year Plan period. It was agreed that the Vice-Principal should continue to lead work to refine the capital investment programme ensuring that this remained consistent with plans for growth. It was agreed that the Vice-Principal should provide further verbal reports on the development of the 2016 Five Year Plan to the UE over the remainder of the current planning round.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

M16/128 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AT FEBRUARY 2016 [Paper: UE/16/084]

The UE received the Group Management Accounts at February 2016.

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

M16/129 CHANGES TO SCHOOL NAMES

The UE noted that, following the reorganisation of the academic activities of the School of Life Sciences, there might need to be changes to the names of the other Schools to reflect their new compositions from August 2016.

The UE agreed that the Principal and the Heads of Schools should consider the need for changes to the names of the Schools and the way in which such changes might be introduced.

M16/130 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that its next meeting would be held 11 April 2016.

Signed by Chair

Date