

Heriot-Watt University

**THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE**

**Minutes: 20 September 2016**

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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 Gill Hogg, Deputy Principal (External Relations)  
Professor John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)  
Professor Stephen McLaughlin, Head (Engineering and Physical Sciences)  
Professor Beatrice Pelloni, Head (Mathematics and Computer Science)  
Professor Fiona Waldron, Head (Textiles and Design)  
Ms Ann Marie Dalton-Pillay, Secretary of the University  
Mr Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance  
Mr Richard McGookin, Director of Planning
- In Attendance: Mr Brett Dodgson, Clerk
- Apologies: Professor Duncan Hand, Interim Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange)  
Professor Robert MacIntosh, Head (Management and Languages)  
Professor Gareth Pender, Head (Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society)

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\* Indicates member participating remotely

**MINUTE REF  
M16/309**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

**M16/310 BLUE PAPERS**

The UE received the Blue Papers for the meeting.

**M16/311 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The UE received the minutes of the meetings held 5 September 2016 and 12 September 2016 and approved them as a correct record.

Arising from minute 16/305 it was agreed that the Deputy Principal (External Relations) should meet with each Head of School to assess progress in developing new taught postgraduate programmes for September 2017 entry and to identify specific issues affecting the development of such programmes.

Arising from minute 16/307 it was noted that a planning template would be circulated for the projects which made up the Transformational Initiatives. It was noted that there could be some overlap between the Transformational Initiatives and work already underway to improve financial reporting systems; it was agreed that the Vice-Principal and the Secretary of the University should consider how related work streams might be coordinated.

**M16/312      REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

In a verbal report the Chair noted that, following the appointment of Professor Gareth Pender as Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation), Professor Malcolm Chrisp had been appointed as Head of the School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society. It was noted that Professor Chrisp had been appointed for a term of two years.

It was noted that discussions between the Scottish Funding Council and the Principals of Scottish universities were continuing. There had as yet been no formal agreement on next year's funding settlement, but there continued to be a constructive dialogue and a positive approach on both sides.

The Chair noted that, together with the Chair of the Court, he had attended an alumni event in Oslo. The event had been hosted at the British Embassy and had been attended by around 100 former students and guests. The event had been followed by a meeting of the Norwegian branch of the Watt Club. Members of the Watt Club had organised a business breakfast with the British Norwegian Chamber of Commerce and this had also been attended by a number of former students. It was noted that this was a model of collaboration which might be replicated by other branches of the Watt Club.

**M16/313      DEANS OF THE UNIVERSITY: ROLE AND FUNCTION [Paper: UE/16/202]**

The UE considered a report on the current and proposed future role and function of the Deans of the University.

It was noted that the role of Dean of the University had been established in the early 2000s following the decision to disestablish the office of Deans of the Faculties. The role had developed since that time and now comprised a diverse range of functions relating to academic standards; academic staff appointments, probationary periods, and promotions; and acting as cross-disciplinary representatives of the academic staff. It was noted that, in some respects, the function of the Deans of the University had been intended to provide interface between the academic staff and the executive managers. It was agreed that, while that function might have been appropriate at the time the role of Deans of the University had been established, it was less appropriate at the current time. It was agreed that there was much more positive role for the Deans of the University in terms of the review and modernisation of the University's academic frameworks and that their cross-disciplinary perspective meant that they were well placed to contribute to the development of academic processes and regulations. It was agreed that the Academic Registrar, the Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee, and the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) should contribute to the defining of the specific responsibilities of the Deans of the University with respect to the academic frameworks.

It was noted that the Statutes required that the role and functions of the Deans of the University to be prescribed in the Ordinances. It was agreed that the draft statement of the functions of the Deans of the University should be revised to make clear the positive role which they had in respect of the academic frameworks. It was agreed that the statement of functions should not include any elements which would have the effect of excluding staff not based at the Edinburgh campus. It was agreed that the draft statement of the functions of the Deans of the University should be presented to the Senate for consideration; subject to the endorsement of the Senate, the statement of the functions would be presented to the Court which would be invited to approve its inclusion within the Ordinances.

It was agreed that further consideration should be given to the way in which the two elected Deans of the University were elected from within defined constituencies. It was noted that the constituency model might no longer be appropriate given the proposed changes to their role and functions.

## PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

### **M16/314 HEADS OF SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS: REVISIONS TO ORDINANCES [Paper: UE/16/203]**

The UE considered drafts of revised Ordinances for the appointment of Heads of Schools and academic staff.

It was noted that the revised Ordinances were intended to support consistency in approach and good practice in relation to equality and diversity, the use of selection criteria, and records of selection decisions.

It was agreed that the drafts should be revised to simplify the proposed requirements where consistent with academic standards and employment good practice. It was agreed that consideration should be given to making the Ordinances relatively short statements of core principles with further guidance on requirements and procedures contained in a separate policy on appointments. It was agreed that comments should be collated and given to the Clerk who would prepare revised versions for consideration by the UE at a future meeting.

### **M16/315 INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE 2015-16 [Paper: UE/16/204]**

The UE considered a report on the University's performance in the 2015-16 academic year.

It was noted that the report summarised the strategic targets specified in the Strategic Plan, the baseline performance, and the performance in the year under review. The UE noted the University performance against its strategic financial, learning and teaching, and research targets.

### **M16/316 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND END OF YEAR SUMMARY [Paper: UE/16/205]**

The UE received the Group management accounts to 31 July 2016 and the end of year financial summary report.

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

### **M16/317 2016 FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN: CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME ASSURANCE [Paper: UE/16/206]**

The UE considered a report on the need to proceed with the 2016 Five Year Financial Plan, and its associated capital investment programme, on the basis that had been provisionally approved by the Court in June 2016.

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

### **M16/218 [Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30 and s.33]**

### **M16/219 LEARNING AND TEACHING BOARD [Paper: UE/16/208]**

The UE received the minutes of the meeting held 7 September 2016.

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**M16/220 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: HALF-YEAR REPORT [Paper: UE/16/209]**

The UE received the Human Resource Development Half-Year Report for the period 1 March 2016 to 31 August 2016. It was noted that the Report included a record of senior academic staff appointments over the report period and that this would be presented for the notice of the Senate.

It was noted that in some areas Performance and Development Review completion rates were lower than average and that this might reflect non-reporting through iHR. It was agreed that the Director of Human Resource should assess Performance and Development Review completion rates and the reasons for variations in completion rates.

**M16/221 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The UE noted that its next meeting would be a performance meeting and would be held 27 September 2016.

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....