

Heriot-Watt University

THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

Minutes: 30 May 2017

In the Chair: Professor Richard A Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Present Also: Professor Julian Jones, Vice-Principal
Ms Ann Marie Dalton-Pillay, Secretary of the University
Professor Robert Craik, Vice-Principal (Malaysia)*
Professor Ammar Kaka, Vice-Principal (Dubai)*
Professor Gill Hogg, Deputy Principal (Engagement and Staff Development)
Dr Gillian Murray, Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business)
Professor Gareth Pender, Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation)
Professor John Sawkins, Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching)
Professor Malcolm Chrisp, Head (Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure, and Society)
Professor Robert MacIntosh, Head (Social Sciences)
Professor Stephen McLaughlin, Head (Engineering and Physical Sciences)
Professor Beatrice Pelloni, Head (Mathematical and Computer Science)*
Professor Fiona Waldron, Head (Textiles and Design)
Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi, Senior Deputy Vice-Principal (Malaysia)*
Mr Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance

In Attendance: Mr Richard McGookin, Director of Planning
Mr Mark Adderley, Director of Human Resource Development
Ms Ruth Moir, Assistant Principal (International Development)
Ms Alison Shields, Interim Head of Communications
Professor John Underhill, Chief Scientist (for item M17/151)
Mr Martyn Spence, Director of Marketing and Communications (for item M17/151)
Mr John McDermott, Clerk

Apologies: Professor Heather McGregor, Executive Dean (Edinburgh Business School)

* Indicates member participating remotely

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WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

M17/148 **BLUE PAPERS**

The UE received and noted the Blue Papers including the Operational Plan and Actions Log. It was agreed to bring forward the date for considering Foundation Programme arrangements.

M17/149 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The UE approved the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2017.

M17/150 **REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

In a verbal report the Chair commended the spectacle and content of the showcase event that had recently taken place on the Galashiels Campus. It was reported that there had been over a thousand visitors to the Campus over the event. Co-locating the final year Showcase and the Fashion Show had resulted in a significant step forward for the School of Textiles and

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Design. The UE agreed that all concerned were to be congratulated for making the event such a success.

The Chair noted that the UE had been invited to consider by correspondence the latest Group management accounts (Paper 17/062). These accounts as at April 2017 were to be presented to the Finance Committee at its meeting on 6 June 2017. Members were requested to raise any comments or questions in relation to the accounts directly with the Director of Finance as soon as possible. No comments were raised at the meeting.

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

The UE noted that a small group of its members would be formed to consider how best to develop a strategy for online provision. Further discussions would take place at the forthcoming UE strategy session.

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

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CHIEF SCIENTIST: ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The UE considered a presentation on the role and responsibilities of the Chief Scientist.

It was noted that whilst similar roles were common in government and in certain commercial arenas, the role at Heriot-Watt was unique among UK universities. The benefits of the role were described, along with some of the successes gained since the creation of the role in late 2016. It was noted that the Media Insight paper (UE/17/061) reflected the increasing external profiles of the role. It was noted that the post title helped provide openings for discussions with governmental and industry bodies.

The UE noted that the post was outwith but complemented the existing managerial structure of the University, and that the role had an important internal focus, as well as being outward looking. It was noted that there was opportunity for the post to help with the co-ordinated sharing of knowledge and contacts. There was suggested to be further scope to mentor colleagues so as to increase the Heriot-Watt representation on external, especially governmental, advisory bodies. To assist that, it was noted that the Chief Scientist would maintain dialogue with Heads of School, and other key stakeholders. The potential impact of the post on enhancing operations in Dubai and Malaysia was considered. It was agreed that a contribution from the Chief Scientist could usefully inform the Transformational Initiative for the support of research. The appropriate members of the UE undertook to continue to explore opportunities with the Chief Scientist.

The Chief Scientist and the Director of Marketing and Communications were thanked for their contribution to the meeting.

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2017 FOUR YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN [Paper: UE/17/055]

The Chair thanked the Vice-Principal, Director of Finance, and Director of Planning, and their respective teams for their significant work in preparing the Four Year Plan. It was noted that this was the final opportunity for the UE consider the detail of the Plan, before the Plan would be presented to the Finance Committee (at a meeting on 6 June 2017). Once the Finance Committee was content, approval for the Plan would be sought from the Court at a meeting on 26 June, and then the approved Plan would be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council.

The Vice-Principal emphasised that once the Plan was approved, budget holders would begin in earnest to implement the Plan.

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

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The UE was informed of the factors behind the creation of several aspects of the Plan, including assumptions on the costs of employment, contingency for pensions, and SFC grants. The projections for student recruitment at the Malaysia Campus were queried, and it was agreed that the matter would be resolved outwith the meeting. With regard to capital expenditure, it was noted that the UE would have further opportunity to consider in detail the specific projects that were planned, prior to any commitment on these.

With some minor adjustments, the UE agreed to endorse the Four Year Plan for consideration by the Finance Committee.

M17/153 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: DEVOLVED FINANCIAL CONTROLS [Paper UE/17/056]

The Secretary of the University introduced the Internal Audit Report of the key financial controls that are devolved to the Schools, drawing particular attention to the summary of key findings. The UE noted the report and approved the management response and action plan arising from the report. It was noted that the paper would be submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration.

M17/154 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: WIDENING ACCESS [Paper UE/17/057]

The Secretary of the University introduced the Internal Audit Report of the governance and control mechanisms in support of the University's strategy to widen access, drawing particular attention to the summary of key findings. The UE noted the report and approved the management response and action plan arising from the report. It was noted that the paper would be submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration.

M17/155 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: APPROVED LEARNING PARTNERS [Paper UE/17/058]

The Secretary of the University introduced the Internal Audit Report of the internal control mechanisms in place to allow the University to monitor Approved Learning Partners' compliance with their contracts with the University, drawing particular attention to the summary of key findings. The UE noted the report and approved the management response and action plan arising from the report. It was noted that the central management of debt collection (as outlined in paper UE/17/56) would assist the resolution of one of the findings in this paper. It was noted that the paper would be submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration.

M17/156 RISK ASSESSMENT AND INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2017-18 [Paper UE/17/059]

The Secretary of the University introduced the updated risk assessment (as conducted by the Internal Auditors, PwC), and the proposed Internal Audit plan for the University for 2017/18. It was noted that the plan was the latest in a five-year rolling programme, and had been informed by a recent PwC report of the various risks facing the sector as a whole, as well as the University's risk register and overall Strategic Plan. It was noted that members of the UE could, through the Secretary of the University, contribute towards the terms of reference of each review.

The UE noted the paper and endorsed the internal audit plan for approval by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 8 June 2017

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**RISKS AND PROJECTS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY GROUP: MINUTES OF MEETING 11
MAY 2017 WITH RISKS REGISTERS [Paper: UE/17/060]**

The UE received the minutes of the meeting held 11 May 2017 and noted the report of business conducted by the Group. The UE noted an amendment to the minutes and action log that would be made before the documents would be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 8 June 2017.

M17/158 MEDIA INSIGHT REPORT: JANUARY TO APRIL 2017 [Paper: UE/17/061]

The UE received the Media Insight Report and agreed the recommendations that:

1. Given limited resources the communications team focus on areas of significant importance to the University as part of 2017/18 communication planning and delivery, building media/social media relations activity around a small number of campaigns. This would allow the team to build knowledge and understanding in depth about the University's areas of expertise and strategic importance.
2. All incoming requests for ad-hoc media relations/social media support be triaged to ensure resources are focussed on the agreed campaigns and only stories likely to deliver a significant return on the investment employed.
3. In recognition of the changing media/social media landscape and the changing way people consume media/social media the communications team develop the communication function around a digital first approach.
4. the communications team support other lead Academics and Senior Managers to engage in media/public affairs opportunities to enhance the reputation of their subject area and the University, e.g. the role of the Chief Scientist.

M17/159 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The UE noted that its next meeting would be a strategy meeting and would be held 6 June 2017. It was noted that one topic for discussion would be the Discovery and Innovation Centre, and that Professor McLaughlin would join the meeting via skype from an overseas visit.

Signed by Chair

Date