THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

UNIVERSITY COURT

9 February 2015

Minute

Present:	Rector (in chair)
	The Principal
	Sheriff Principal E Bowen
	Ms D Davidson
	Professor A M Smyth
	Professor J Ansell
	Dr A Richards, Vice-Convener
	Mr D Bentley
	Dr R Black
	Dr C Masters
	Lady S Rice
	Ms A Lamb
	Ms B Pegado, President, Students' Representative Council
	Ms T Boardman, Vice-President Students' Representative Council
In attendance:	Ms S Beattie-Smith, Rector's Assessor
	Senior Vice-Principal Professor C Jeffery
	Vice-Principal Professor D Miell
	Vice-Principal Professor Sir John Savill
	Vice-Principal Professor L Yellowlees
	Vice-Principal Professor S Rigby
	Assistant Principal Dr T Harrison
	University Secretary, Ms S Smith
	Mr H Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
	Mr G McLachlan, Chief Information Officer
	Ms L Chalmers, Director of Legal Services
	Mr G Douglas, Deputy Director, Student Experience
	Mr G Jebb, Director of Estates
	Ms Z Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources
	Mr P McNaull, Director of Finance
	Mrs T Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
	Ms F Boyd, Head of Stakeholder Relations and Senior Executive Officer
	Ms K Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services
	Dr K J Novosel, Head of Court Services
Apologies:	The Rt Hon D Wilson, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh
	Mr A Johnston
	Dr M Aliotta
	Professor S Cooper
	Dr C Phillips
	Mr P Budd
	Mr L Matheson

This meeting of Court was preceded by a presentation "Preparing for Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2015" delivered by Assistant Principal Dr Tina Harrison.

1	**Minute**	**Paper A**

The Minute of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2014 was approved as a correct record subject to an amendment to item 5 in respect of declaration of interest.

Mr Gavin McLachlan, Chief Information Officer was welcomed to this his first meeting of Court.

Court further noted that this was potentially the last meeting for the Rector, Mr Peter McColl and his Rector's Assessor Ms Sarah Beattie-Smith. Court thanked both for their work during the last three years.

2	**Principal's Communications**	**Paper B**

Court noted the content of the Principal's Report and the additional information on: the excellent REF2014 result and the potential funding issues and impact on the completion of the Outcome Agreement; the event at Easter Bush and the reception for donors at Holyrood Palace; the announcement regarding the University to become one of five Universities to lead the Alan Turing Institute; discussions at the last meeting of Senate on student community engagement; and the current position on the USS consultation on reforms and consequences for the University.

3	**Designation of Vice-Principal**	**Paper C**

On the recommendation of the Principal, Court approved the extension of the remit of Professor Norman and her new designation of Vice-Principal People and Culture with effect from 1 April 2015 until 31 July 2017.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4	**SRUC Strategic Alignment**	**Paper D**

6	**Turing Institute**	**Paper E**

The progress on taking forward the establishment of the Alan Turing Institute (ATI) was noted. Court welcomed the official announcement on 28 January 2015 that the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, Oxford, Warwick and UCL had been invited to join the ATI Joint

Venture (JV) being co-ordinated by the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

Vice-Principal Professor Kenway was leading the negotiations on behalf of the University to finalise the JV Agreement due to be signed around the 15 March 2015. Court delegated authority to the Principal or the University Secretary to sign the Agreement on behalf of the University on the recommendation of the negotiation Team: the Court Sub-Group would be updated on progress.

Court noted that the University had established an ATI Project Board and that the University was leading on the drafting of the Research Strategy, Computing and Data Science Services and Business Plan on behalf of the JV members. It was also welcomed that a team was being established in the Informatics Forum able to undertake work for ATI from the beginning of April and that construction of the Data Technology Institute adjacent to the Informatics Forum would provide a physical location from 2017.

| 7 | **Research Excellence Framework 2014: the results** | **Paper F** |

Court noted the paper and the University's achievements in the REF 2014 being ranked overall 4th in the UK based on research power with the individual subject areas of Engineering; Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Science; Sociology; Geosciences and Geography; and Informatics achieving UK 1st place. Court congratulated all those across the University who had been involved particularly Vice-Principal Professor Seckl and his team: the University's submission strategy including the joint submissions was commended.

| 8 | **Student Experience: Update by Heads of Colleges** | **Paper G** |

A significant number of initiatives were currently underway on student experience and Court welcomed the Heads of the three Colleges to this meeting to discuss the focus in each of their areas.

Court noted the work being undertaken across all three Colleges particularly around improving student feedback and assessment, the support and training being provided to staff and improved staff appraisal processes, sharing good practice, developing communities (campus, School and College levels), leadership initiatives and rewarding excellence in teaching. There was also discussion on the communications being provided to students to keep them informed of the actions being taken. It was noted that regular reports would continue to be provided to Court on student experience.

| 9 | **Update of Outcome Agreement Process** | **Paper H** |

Court noted the challenges in finalising the Outcome Agreement and the on-going discussions with the SFC. The feedback from the SFC on the draft Agreement submitted on 11 December 2014 was noted

and the continuing uncertainty on the funds to be allocated through the Research Excellence Grant: confirmation having been received of the removal of the Global Excellence Initiative. Court further noted the impact on the University's internal planning round and was content with the proposed approach with presentation of the final plans and budgets to the June Court for approval. Court was also content with the approach to finalise the Outcome Agreement with the intention of the final document being approved by the Exception Committee on behalf of Court prior to the publication by the SFC of the sector Outcome Agreements at the end of April.

10   IT infrastructure Review   Paper I

The preparation of the IT Infrastructure Roadmap under the auspice of the Knowledge Strategy Committee was welcomed by Court promoting debate on this important area. Court noted the Roadmap which covered an initial period of 5 years and was supportive of the approach in a rapidly changing area: funding to take forward the Roadmap would be considered as part of the current planning round. It was further noted that the Knowledge Strategy Committee would monitor progress via routine progress reports from the IT Committee.

11   Student Accommodation – Buccleuch Place and Meadow Lane   Paper J

Court approved the proposals which had the endorsement of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Estates Committee to progress with the development of student accommodation at Buccleuch Place and Meadow Lane at a total projected project cost of £29.73m. It was noted that these proposals were subject to planning approval and that there were particular planning challenges around Meadow Lane which were being addressed.

12   Endowment Arrangements – College of Medicine and Veterinary   Paper K
Medicine

On the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee, Court approved the minor amendments to the Approval and Reporting process for proposals under Ordinance 209 in respect of alteration of the terms of endowments and the specific proposals to reform the endowments for the benefit of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine of over 25 years standing. Court commended the approach and noted the intention to propose further reforms for endowments of less than 25 years standing.

13   Enhancing the Employment of Hourly Paid Employees   Paper L

Court noted the report which confirmed that the University has now ceased the use of zero-hours contracts and introduced contracts which offered a guaranteed minimum number of hours of work for all hourly-paid employees. It was further welcomed that work was

continuing to enhance the employment of this important group of staff including a survey to help develop an appropriate approach.

ROUTINE ITEMS

14   EUSA President's Report   **Paper M**

Court noted the items within the EUSA President's Report and the additional information on: EUSA's improving financial position; development of a strategic plan; and successful launch of the Edinburgh Student Arts Festival.

15   Policy and Resources Committee Report   **Paper N**

Court noted the report particularly the re-introduction of a post approval group in respect of staff recruitment and approved the revised policy for the naming of buildings, rooms and other facilities.

16   Nominations Committee Report   **Paper O**

On the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, Court approved the appointment of Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery as a Curator of Patronage with effect from 1 August 2015 for a period of one year.

17   Knowledge Strategy Report   **Paper P**

Court noted the report and approved the minor change in the terms of reference of the Committee and approved the revised Information Security Policy, both with immediate effect. Court further noted and was content with the revised cost for the previously agreed purchase of additional storage facilities in respect of the UK Research Data Facility.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING (Please note these items are not normally discussed.)

18   Academic Report   **Paper Q**
Court noted the report.

19   Resolutions   **Paper R**
Court approved the following Resolutions:

Resolution No. 1/2015:	Foundation of a A G Leventis Foundation Chair of Byzantine Studies
Resolution No. 2/2015:	Foundation of a Chair of Energy Storage
Resolution No. 3/2015:	Foundation of a Chair of Combustion Engines
Resolution No. 4/2015:	Foundation of a Chair of Evolutionary Ecology

	Resolution No. 5/2015:	Foundation of a Chair of Carbon Management and Education
	Resolution No. 6/2015:	Foundation of a Chair of Physics Education
	Resolution No. 7/2015:	Foundation of four Chairs of Technology Enhanced Science Education
	Resolution No. 8/2015:	Foundation of a Personal Chair of Molecular Metabolism
	Resolution No. 9/2015	Foundation of a Chair of Economics

20 US GAAP Annual Report and Accounts   Paper S

Court noted confirmation of the approval of the US GAAP Annual Report and Accounts by the Court Sub-Group on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee Sub-Group. The significant demands and challenges in preparing two sets of Accounts in accordance with different financial standards were noted.

21 SFC-Strategic dialogue   Paper T

It was noted that the strategic dialogue meeting with the SFC would be held in May and Court was content with the proposed agenda items for this meeting: two members of Court would be involved in the meeting.

22 School of Informatics, Robotarium, The Edinburgh Centre for Robotics   Paper U

Court approved the proposed change from the purchasing to the leasing of the NASA Valkyrie Robot noting that the overall level of expenditure remained as previously approved.

24 University Regents   Paper V

Court approved the three new Regents: Professor Charles Hendry MP, Ms Christine Montgomery and Dr Philippa Gregory, and further confirmed the existing Regents. Court further noted and welcomed the report on the activities during 2014

25 Donations and Legacies   Paper W

Court noted the donations and legacies received by the Development Trust from 21 November 2014 to 21 January 2015.

26 Uses of the Seal

A record was made available of all the documents executed on behalf of the Court since its last meeting and sealed with its common seal.

27   Date of next meeting

The next meeting of Court will be held on Monday, 11 May 2015 at 2.00 pm in the Raeburn Room, Old College.