

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 22 JANUARY 2009 AT 6.30 p.m.
IN THE WILLIAMS ROOM**

ACTION

Present : As per Sederunt Sheets

Apologies : Laurence Durnan, Chris Hall, Jessica Harwood,
Karen Jespersen, Laura Laws, Stuart Rodger,
Alex Thomson, Gareth Webb

1 RESIGNATION

G Lee informed Council that he had received an email from the Education Faculty Convenor stating that due to his heavy workload this year he was resigning from his position. Council conveyed a vote of thanks for his input over the last couple of years.

2 GUARDIAN ARTICLE

G Lee referred to an article in Guardian regarding the SRC's Strategic Plan where it was reported that a serious breach of copyright by Edinburgh's Queen Margaret University Students' Union had taken place. All QMUSU Strategic Plans have now been recalled, an apology has been received by the SRC and a QMSU member of staff has been subject to disciplinary action. As far as the SRC is concerned the matter is now closed.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

11 December 2008 – Factual Corrections

None. Minutes adopted by Council.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Mahara & Users of E-PDP demo (Refer 4.3)

J Wightwick met with the Convenors and discussed Mahara and how to promote it better within the University. He informed Council that the latest user statistics indicate that about 10% of the University are using it. There was a general consensus amongst the group that there should be a common understanding amongst University staff and students alike that Mahara is only one element of PDP and a holistic approach to PDP engagement was required. A new group, the Graduate Attributes Working Group, is starting up soon and J Wightwick will be on the Committee so he will report back in the future.

4.2 Student Rep Moodle (Refer 4.6)

J Wightwick had attended a workshop on this and found it extremely useful. He intends to do a mock test on the website soon to obtain some feedback. He is also considering how the student representative moodle can be developed so as to be more interactive.

JW

4.3 New Principal Announced (Refer 5.2)

G Lee had sent a letter of congratulations to the new Principal and enclosed a copy of the Strategic Plan and Annual Report. A lunch will be arranged nearer the time to introduce him to the SRC and Exec.

4.4 March Election Preparation (Refer 7.1)

Z Grams informed Council that a design for the election publicity material is currently being worked on. She has established a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section on the website and hopes members will look at it and think about any questions they had when they were standing in the elections. Any feedback would be welcome. Z Grams pointed out that with the current website style there is no other way to delineate the different manifestos more clearly.

4.5 Wednesday Afternoons – meeting with GUSA (Refer 7.2)

G Lee met with the GUSA President, the Vice Principal (Learning Teaching and Internationalisation) and the Clerk of Senate to discuss how students undertaking Life Science courses could be helped overcome current timetabling difficulties in order to participate in Wednesday afternoon options. From this meeting G Lee is now in discussions with D Watt who has responsibility for the Life Sciences timetable.

4.6 Christian Union (Refer 8.5)

G Lee gave an update on this. L Laws and G Lee met with the University Chaplain to discuss how to move forward with the issue around the Christian Union affiliation. A compromise was reached and they are now satisfied with the approach that was taken by the Christian Union and they are now fully affiliated with the SRC.

4.7 Convenors, Officers & Court Assessor's Reports (Refer 9)

B Hay is finalising this at the moment. If anyone else has any views on the current form please let him know. The report back form will be ready for the next meeting.

BH

4.8 Freshers' Week Report (Refer 12)**Masters Students Freshers' Pack**

J Wightwick will raise this at the next Head of Graduate Schools meeting.

JW

4.9 Education Faculty (Refer 15.3)

In the absence of an Education Convenor, J Wightwick will investigate the issue relating to the application process and information available, when applying for a postgraduate place in secondary teaching.

JW

4.10 Media Week (Refer 15.9)

Z Grams had investigated the idea of filming some of the talks during Media Week. There were some legal issues which mitigated against it so it was decided not to pursue this at the moment.

5 SABBATICAL OFFICERS' REPORTS – 5 Dec 2008 – 15 Jan 2009

Council were invited to ask questions pertaining to each of the Sabbatical Officers' reports.

GAVIN LEE, PRESIDENT (Copy of report circulated)

5.1 Mature Students' Association

D McGowran asked what the proposals are for accommodating mature students' in the John McIntyre Building. G Lee reported that a meeting had taken place to discuss options for SRC utilisation of the section of the John McIntyre Building currently occupied by John Smiths (who are due to move to the Fraser Building). Part of the discussion had been about the development of a social/learning space in the building which could be used by various student groups.

5.2 Chaplaincy

A Cohen asked about the potential services offered by the Chaplaincy in the Library at exam periods. G Lee explained the Chaplaincy is considering having a member of their staff available in the library at exam times for students who feel they would like to speak to someone. S Hall welcomed the idea but had slight concerns that some groups may be alienated by a representative of a particular denomination being the sole presence. T Gore advised that if students felt strongly about speaking to someone they could also contact Nightline.

5.3 John McIntyre Building Plans

K Law asked if the plans for the John McIntyre Building have been drawn up yet. G Lee informed Council that there had been some delays and a redrafting process was currently underway; it is hoped to have the completed proposals by the middle of March.

6 JAMIE WIGHTWICK, VP (LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT) (Copy of report circulated)

6.1 EdPSC Meeting

J Wightwick updated Council on this. A Cohen asked if a one year Masters qualification will be recognised in other countries. G Lee explained that this is what the Bologna process is about and there will be ongoing discussion.

6.2 Non Sabb Exec Office Hours

I MacDonald asked if this was working well. S Hall advised that she found the opportunity to work more closely with the sabbaticals really useful. J Wightwick asked if anyone would like to be involved in any project to let him know.

6.3 Head of Graduate Schools Forum

N Gray asked about the discussion regarding what 'writing up' constitutes in fee terms. It would appear there are major discrepancies about this and

J Wightwick reported the issue was raised and there was a short discussion but nothing was decided and a more thorough investigation will take place.

6.4 NUMBER: Student Mathematical Support

T Eriksson asked if NUMBER will be rolled out to students as it had been well received at the Retention Working Group. J Wightwick confirmed there is a plan to expand it.

7 ZOE GRAMS, VP (MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS) (Copy of report circulated)

7.1 Publicity Classes

Z Grams met with S Hall to discuss organising classes in publicity, targeted specifically at Clubs & Societies. A pilot class will take place during Media Week.

7.2 Election Publicity

This will be displayed next week.

7.3 Media Week Preparations

This is going really well. If anyone wants to see the full list of events please contact Z Grams.

8 LAURA LAWS, VP (STUDENT SUPPORT) (Copy of report circulated)

As L Laws had submitted her apologies, G Lee was happy to answer any questions.

8.1 Equality Training for Students

K Law asked about this. G Lee reported that it has been suggested that every student coming to University should undergo a compulsory training session on Equality & Diversity issues. G Lee elaborated on his own concerns, in particular his doubts about whether the proposals would have any impact. A discussion followed and the following points were raised:

- * No one had any objection in the University offering training but it should not be compulsory;
- * A 1½ hour training session will not be successful in changing any individual's 'mindset',
- * Whilst it is recognised that the issues the University face may reflect those of society as a whole there is an inevitable element of value judgment involved. It could be argued, in a liberal learning environment, that it would be inappropriate to move too far towards dictating to students what to think.
- * There was unanimity in favour of enhancing equalities information's availability but a general consensus that this proposal was far from a reasonable option.

G Lee will continue to work with the Equality & Diversity Unit to enable

them to fulfil their function. Council will be kept up to date.

ACTION

9 CONVENORS, OFFICERS & COURT ASSESSOR'S REPORTS

9.1 S Hall, Clubs & Societies Officer

A copy was circulated to everyone for information. No questions.

9.2 T Eriksson, General Rep

A copy was circulated to everyone for information. No questions.

9.3 J Harrison, General Rep

9.3.1 Future Activities

J Harrison is meeting next week with Z Grams to discuss the Council Handbook and preparations for Media Week.

9.3.2 Health, Safety & Environment Committee - Health Service Issue

G Lee referred to the comment in J Harrison's report regarding SRC members on committees keeping in contact more on certain issues. He reminded members that there is staff support for every Committee that student reps are on and urged them to use this. He was concerned with the minutes from the HSEC as a discussion had taken place at the last Council meeting regarding the Health Service. At that meeting a consensus had been achieved and the approach of the SRC Executive endorsed. However the individual's at the Health, Safety & Environment Committee adopted a different stance and made some comments on issues which had been discussed and addressed at the previous council meeting.

B Hay reaffirmed G Lee's statement and outlined the responsibility of Council members to utilise staff support and other sources of information to ensure they were adequately informed and prepared for meetings. Further, once agreed there was a responsibility to reflect the agreed view of Council.

G Lee explained that the University had now been presented with two differing SRC perspectives on the UHS which is considerably damaging to the SRC's credibility.

G Lee will arrange for the list of committee staff contacts to be circulated so everyone will know who they should speak to prior to attending any meetings.

NJ

10 REPORTS FROM EVERY MEMBER OF COUNCIL

Council noted that the Sabbaticals have agreed to set up meetings with all members to facilitate a couple of hour's discussion of which goals everyone wants to achieve by the end of six months. The Sabbs will be contacting everyone over the next week to set up some dates.

SABBS

11 UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICE

G Lee updated Council since the last meeting. The University had drawn

up a ‘then and now’ programme and circulated it to students asking for feedback which resulted in a good response.

ACTION

The SRC has highlighted its main areas of concern to the University which, although previously addressed verbally, will be addressed in writing. Those concerns relate to:

- Speedy access to mental health support provision
- Students may not be able to join practice if list is full
- Keeping costs at the same or reduced levels for travel vaccines
- Emergency cases dealt with immediately

The SRC wants to ensure that students receive an enhanced provision of health care on campus and is optimistic that the NHS practice in the Fraser Building will provide this. However there is a need to ensure effective monitoring systems in place in order that action can be taken if the service does not meet expectations. Council members reaffirmed their endorsement of the SRC approach. G Lee suggested that if students are asking questions to pass them on and he would be happy to discuss any concerns with them.

12 ATTENDANCE MONITORING

J Wightwick reported that the University is working on a new Attendance Monitoring Policy and outlined the main points. He also highlighted recent legislation targeted at international students, on which clarification is still awaited. A discussion followed with the majority of Council members expressing concern at the targeting of international students and potential impact on all students who may face delays getting into lectures (if a swipe card monitoring system were introduced). There were also concerns around the costs against the benefits of implementation. J Wightwick advised he will feed the views back to the University and will continue to keep Council informed.

JW

13 ELECTION FAQS

Z Grams asked for any ideas on how to include more people in the nomination election process.

14 AOCB

14.1 Website

J Harrison suggested having a list of Convenors and Officers on the SRC website. Z Grams will organise this.

ZG

14.2 Exam Results

S Ritchie highlighted a matter which had been brought to his attention recently. His understanding of moving the exam diet to December was to allow the University calendar to be brought forward but results are coming out at the same time as students sitting exams in January. J Wightwick asked for members to send some examples to him and he will investigate the issue.

JW

14.3 Ring Fence Funding

H Dickson was pleased to see that an email had been circulated to part time students from Registry informing them the ring fence funding is available and inviting applications.

ACTION

14.4 Sustainability Committee

H Dickson offered to establish a new Sustainability Committee. G Lee suggested that himself, L Laws, H Dickson, D McGowran, J Harrison & L Durnan meet in the next couple of weeks and discuss how to take this forward. B Hay will be the staff support for this Committee.

LL

14.5 Teaching Excellence Awards

J Wightwick had been asked to nominate one person to join him on the selection committee this year. A Munro volunteered.

14.6 Apologies

G Lee apologised to M Wilson, one of the Advice, Policy & Training Officers for not having introduced her to Council.

14.7 Library Presentation from J Wightwick

J Wightwick gave a presentation of the plans for the Level 3 Annexe in the library.

14.8 Same Sex Marriage

G Lee had received an email from a student asking the SRC's thoughts on the e-petition on same sex marriage in Scotland. G Lee asked whether or not members wish the SRC to take a stance on it or whether it is an individual decision. A discussion followed. G Lee will circulate the email to Council and if individuals want to sign the petition they are free to do so.

GL

14.9 Global Village

G Lee reminded Council this was taking place at the QM Union and hoped to see members there after the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.