

University of St Andrews

MINUTE OF THE STATUTORY HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL HELD ON SATURDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2007 at 11 am in the HARWOOD ROOM in the BARNES WALLIS BUILDING on the SACKVILLE STREET CAMPUS of the UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

The Vice-Chancellor of the University was in the chair.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Father Rodney Middleton.

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Dr Brian Lang welcomed about 35 members to the meeting.

1. Minutes of the Council's last statutory meeting held, 30 June 2007

The minutes of this meeting, held in St Andrews, were received and agreed as a correct record.

2. Business Committee of the General Council

(a) Report of the Committee's meeting, 27 October 2007

Mr Martyn Strachan, Convener of the Business Committee, presented this report which the Council *approved*, taking particular note of the following items of business:-

Council's Registration Fee - The General Council Registration fee in 2008 would rise from £48 to £50, which was below the current rate of inflation.

Graduation Garden Parties - The General Council's sponsorship of the Graduation Garden Parties would be continued in 2008.

(b) Membership

Council confirmed the 2008 timetable for the election of three members to the Business Committee. As previously agreed the on-line voting arrangements, which had been successfully introduced in 2007, would once again be implemented.

(c) Registrar to General Council

Council agreed to recommend to the University Court that Mr Stephen Magee, Vice-Principal (External Relations) be appointed as Registrar to General Council with immediate effect.

3. Committee of the Alumnus Association

Miss K M Patrick, Convener of this Committee, presented reports of its meetings held on 1 September 2007 and 10 November 2007. Approving these reports the Committee noted the positive feedback that had been received in relation to the 2007 edition and the range of planned features for the 2008 edition. Council also noted the plans that were being developed in relation to 2009 which would be the 100th edition of the Chronicle and a feature on the Younger Hall in the Hall's 75th Anniversary year.

4. Address by the Principal

Dr Brian Lang, Principal of the University, addressed the meeting. He assured members of Council that the University continued to flourish.

The University had progressed to being in the top 5 in the UK University league tables and importantly the top mainstream University in the results of the National Student Survey. Research performance was world class and the quality of teaching continued to achieve excellent ratings. The University were in the final stages of preparing the submission for the Research Assessment exercise and it was anticipated that more than 90% of the staff would be included. This demonstrated that the number of staff carrying out national and international quality research has continued to grow.

Funding remained one of the biggest challenges for the University. It would be critical for the University's future that there was no reliance on a single source of funding, particularly Government funding. A review of Higher Education Funding in Scotland had been called for; however, this had been turned down although a Future Thinking Working Party had been established.

The Principal concluded by looking to the future and the opportunities that the 600th Anniversary would bring. The celebrations would be used to position St Andrews as a world class university with an excellent reputation in research that produced excellent students.

The Principal then responded to questions on a range of topics including the defining of criteria for measuring success in graduates and how graduates could assist the University to address the funding challenges.

5. Proposed New School of Medicine

The Dean of Medicine addressed Council, outlining the vision for a new School of Medicine and an Interdisciplinary Medical Research Institute to be built on the North Haugh. The building proposal represented the largest single capital development in the University's history and if all progressed according to plan, the building would be completed in time for the student intake in September 2010.

The key features of the building concept were explained, including the physical and research linkages to a range of science disciplines and the range of flexible teaching and research facilities that had been incorporated in the plans.

Collaborative research opportunities were a key feature of the planned building and this would support and enhance the current research activity in the areas of medical photonics and virology. Council members were also reassured that the Bute Building would be redeveloped for continued use by the University although it was recognised that it was a complex building to convert.

Curriculum developments were also outlined to members, including plans for significantly increased student numbers and new developments at taught and research postgraduate levels.

Mr Stuart Armstrong, Director of Fundraising for the Project, responded to questions collectively and individually regarding the funding proposals for the new building.

The meeting closed with the pronouncements of the benediction.

DR BRIAN LANG
Principal and Vice Chancellor