THE UNIVERSITY OF KENT

C O U R T

Minutes of the Forty Seventh Annual General Meeting held on 25 January 2013

Note: (i) The list of members present at the meeting and submitting their apologies for absence is given in Annex A to these Minutes (appended).

(ii) With the exception of copies of the slides used by Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow (Vice-Chancellor) and Tony Quigley (Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee) for their presentations under, respectively, Minutes 416 and 417 below, all papers and reports for this meeting were circulated prior to the Court’s meeting.

413 WELCOME

1. The Chancellor, Sir Robert Worcester, welcomed all those present to the 2013 Annual General Meeting of the University’s Court.

2. The Chancellor extended an especially warm welcome to the following:

   • Julian Brazier, Member of Parliament for Canterbury
   • Admiral the Lord Boyce, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports
   • Cllr. Robert Waters, Lord Mayor of Canterbury
   • The Very Revd. Dr. Mark Beach, Dean of Rochester
   • John Simmonds, Chair of the University’s Council

3. The Chancellor welcomed members of the Court to the Colyer-Fergusson Music Building which had been completed in the Autumn Term and formally opened on 8 December with music by The University of Kent Concert Band, Symphony Orchestra, Chorus and Chamber Choir. The Building had been funded by the Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, Sir James Colyer-Fergusson and many other philanthropic donations. The Chancellor also drew attention to the display in the foyer concerning the University’s proposals for a major refurbishment and extension of the Templeman Library due to start later in the year.

4. The Chancellor introduced the officers who were to speak to the annual reports for the Court’s meeting:

   • Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow, Vice-Chancellor
   • Tony Quigley, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee

414 MEMBERSHIP AND BUSINESS OF THE COURT

The Court noted Papers CT2013/1, Ordinance 9 concerning the Court’s membership and business, and CT2013/2, its current membership.

415 MINUTES OF THE COURT’S MEETING ON 27 JANUARY 2012

The Minutes of the Forty Sixth Annual General Meeting held on 27 January 2012 were confirmed.
1. The Court received the circulated Annual Review.

2. The Vice-Chancellor presented the Annual Review for 2011/2012 and highlights of the University’s activities from Autumn 2012 to date. Copies of the Vice-Chancellor’s slides for her presentation were tabled at the meeting.

The Vice-Chancellor began by acknowledging the commitment of the members of the Council, particularly the Chair, John Simmonds, and the Deputy Chair, Tony Quigley. The Institutional Strategic Plan for 2009-2012 had reached a successful conclusion in 2012 as a result of the efforts of members of Council, members of staff and students of the University. Demonstration of the University’s continued success included its improved position in national league tables; a top 30 position in the Sunday Times and a ranking of 22nd in The Guardian had been achieved and the University had been placed 3rd among comparable institutions in the latest National Student Survey. These were outstanding achievements for the University.

The new arrangements for funding teaching through tuition fees and control of undergraduate student numbers from 2012 had caused greater uncertainty across the Higher Education Sector but only a small reduction in admissions for Kent. Application figures for 2013 were encouraging. The Vice-Chancellor said that the University was moving forward with confidence under its new Institutional Strategic Plan (for 2012-2015) towards its 50th Anniversary in 2015.

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the wide range of the University’s world-leading research and commented on its impact on the wider community including social policy, industry and conservation. She highlighted a few examples:

- Professor Peter Taylor-Gooby’s research linking cuts in public funding and poverty to public disorder;

- The pioneering research of MA student Nina Gurung on Gurkha settlement and integration in the UK;

- The Research Group, led by Professor Martin Warren, part of an international team, which had discovered how nature makes heme, the component that gives blood its colour and allows red blood cells to carry oxygen around the body;

- Research in the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), for example, to unlock the DNA of long-extinct parrots, and give hope for the survival of some of the world’s rarest birds such as the Mauritius parakeet.

The University’s positive endorsement from its students through the National Student Survey for 2012 confirmed the inspirational teaching and overall excellent quality of “the student experience” at Kent. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted some of the many factors which contributed to “the student experience”:

- The University’s on-going capital programme to enhance its facilities, this including:
- The completion of a state-of-the-art digital crit space for the School of Architecture to enable students to present their ideas and designs to small groups;
- The restoration of listed buildings in the Historic Dockyard at Chatham for the teaching of Fine Art and Music;
- The expansion of Sports facilities at Canterbury;
- Future plans for the refurbishment and extension of the Templeman Library and also for the provision of a moot room and new facilities for the Kent Law Clinic, part of the Kent Law School, supported by philanthropic donations.

- The University’s innovative Employability Points Scheme which had been short-listed for a Times Higher Award. During 2011/2012 nearly 2,000 students had participated in the Scheme which supported the personal and work-skills development of students by encouraging them to collect reward points for active engagement in non-compulsory activities.

- Santander Universities UK had agreed to provide funding to support international scholarships, student mobility and an employability programme designed to enhance student entrepreneurship.

- The Oxford University Press prize for ‘Law Teacher of the Year 2012’ which had been awarded to Dr Karen Devine from the Kent Law School.

- The University’s new MA in Heritage Management run jointly with the Athens University of Economics and Business. The A.G. Leventis Foundation had agreed to provide scholarships to support the programme.

The Vice-Chancellor said that the University had continued its long-standing commitment to community engagement. This provided opportunities for community use of many University facilities including those at the Sports Centre and through the Gulbenkian Youth Theatre and schools programme. The University’s Open Lecture series continued to be a success with recent eminent speakers including Sir Christopher Meyer, Baroness Prashar, Lord Moynihan and Sir Cyril Chantler. Kent students had set a new record by providing over 80,000 voluntary hours to helping others in 2011/2012.

The University continued its role as lead sponsor of the Brompton Academy School in Gillingham and considerable progress had been achieved, notably improved examination results and a successful OFSTED inspection. OFSTED had praised the University’s involvement, this including its success in engaging more than 50 parents in adult learning.

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the University’s continuing international impact, in particular the very vibrant and supportive Alumni Association in Hong Kong and the continuing success of the University’s centres in Paris and Brussels.

The Vice-Chancellor drew Court’s attention to the many successes and achievements of University’s staff, both academic and in professional services, outlined in the Annual Review. The University’s success depended on the contribution of all of its staff.

Finally, the Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to the Chancellor of the University, Sir Robert Worcester, whose term of office was due to end on 31 July 2013. Sir Robert had joined the University’s Council in 2002 and he had been appointed Chancellor in 2006. As Chancellor he had presided over annual meetings of the Court and numerous degree ceremonies held in Canterbury and Rochester.
Cathedrals. He had also held appointment as an honorary professor in politics and, over the years, he had given many lectures and seminars. He had made an outstanding contribution to the University. The Vice-Chancellor thanked Sir Robert for the many ways in which he had supported the University, including by the very generous donation of a Steinway grand piano for the Colyer-Fergusson Concert Hall.

With acclamation the Court endorsed the Vice-Chancellor’s tribute and thanks to Sir Robert.

3. Questions

Christopher Gay said that he perceived that there was a more positive feeling about student behaviour in Canterbury and he asked whether there were any specific reasons for the improvement.

Professor Richard Norman commented that the improvement had been from a very low level and that problems persisted in the St. Michael’s Road area. Professor Norman asked whether the University was taking further steps to improve student behaviour.

The Vice-Chancellor’s response indicated that she had also perceived an improvement. The University had taken a number of steps to seek to improve the position, this including regular liaison with local groups, the activities of the College Masters in setting boundaries through disciplinary procedures and Kent Union’s work with students, particularly those involved in Union societies. The University had also built more student accommodation on campus to relieve pressure on housing in the City and there were plans to build additional residential accommodation for students adjacent to Keynes College. The University would continue to promote and take action to ensure good behaviour by its students.

Tom Ritchie, President of Kent Union, echoed the Vice-Chancellor’s comments and said that problems in the local community by Kent students were caused by a very small number of students. Kent Union would continue to work with the Student Services Department to resolve issues.

Professor Jan Pahl reported that the St. Michael's Road Residents Association had produced a booklet of guidance for students and she suggested that the University or Kent Union should circulate copies to students resident off campus.

Her Honour Judge Adèle Williams commented that in her experience as Resident Judge at Canterbury Crown Court students were more likely to be the victims of crime than the perpetrators.

Julian Brazier MP commented positively on the progress over the last 15 years in relation to student behaviour, the contribution of Kent Union and the University’s work with approved landlords. He thanked the Vice-Chancellor for being very prompt in resolving a recent issue.

4. The Court noted, with acclamation, the Annual Review for 2011/2012.

417 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2012

1. The Court received the circulated Financial Statements for 2011/2012.
2. Tony Quigley, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, presented the Financial Statements for 2011/2012. Copies of Mr Quigley’s slides for his presentation were tabled at the meeting.

Mr Quigley said that 2011/2012 had been a successful financial year with an unqualified audit opinion on the accounts, a strong balance sheet, increased capital expenditure, a reduction in debt as a proportion of income, a strong cash position and a healthy surplus.

The impact of increased tuition fees for home undergraduate students from 2012/2013 had been broadly in line with expectations and it had not required any in-year financial adjustments to budgets or forecasts.

Mr Quigley said that the challenges in the years ahead included uncertainties about the response of student demand to increased tuition fees, a decline in the real value of tuition fees, a more difficult environment for external research funding, global economic difficulties, the impact of visa restrictions on the recruitment of international students, pressures on costs and the possibility of increased pension liabilities. Mr Quigley said that notwithstanding these challenges it was essential to continue investment in new or improved facilities and to continue to meet student expectations and to enhance further the University’s research capacity in preparation for the Research Excellence Framework submission in November 2014. Mr Quigley paid tribute to the work of the Finance Office for its work during the year towards the University’s positive financial performance in 2011/2012.

Mr Quigley said that the University’s strong financial position, excellent performance in the 2012 National Student Survey and significantly improved league table position were positive factors in the University’s favour which would enable it to address the challenges of the future with confidence.

3. Questions

Professor Richard Scase asked whether the University had a strategy for increasing its external research income from the private sector or to develop a greater focus on wealth creating research to address the current decline in research funding from traditional sources.

The Vice-Chancellor said that University’s strategy sought to raise research funding from a wide range of sources including the private sector and charities. The absence of large companies in the region did, however, create a difficulty for the University given the regional nature of most private sector research funding. Smaller businesses were generally unable to fund university research. She noted that a good example of the University’s contribution to the development of science-based industry in the region had been its support to former Pfizer staff to develop a start-up company, based on the Canterbury campus, to provide crystallography and biophysics services to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry.

418 DATE OF THE COURT’S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN 2014

The Court noted that the proposed date for its next Annual General Meeting was in the afternoon of Friday 31 January 2014 and that it was hoped that the meeting would be followed by the Chancellor’s Lecture for 2014. The Secretary would confirm the detailed arrangements for the Court’s meeting and, if appropriate, the Chancellor’s Lecture nearer the time. 

Action: Secretary
419 CHANCELLOR’S LECTURE IN 2013

Following the conclusion of the Court’s formal business the Chancellor thanked members for their attendance and invited them to attend the 2013 Chancellor’s Lecture, to be given by Sir Robert Worcester on “Public Opinion: Friend or Foe?”, in the Lecture Theatre in Woolf College at 6.30pm.

Notes
(i) Following the Court’s meeting Professor Keith Mander, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and Susan Wanless, Director of Music, spoke briefly about the Colyer-Fergusson Music Building and members toured the Building to see the new facilities for themselves.

(ii) Any queries about the above should be directed to Dr Keith Lampard, Secretary of the Court from 1/8/2013 [K.J.Lampard@kent.ac.uk or 01227 827892].

KRG/KJL/HAP
13.08.2013

Attachment: Annex A: Attendance and Apologies for the meeting.