

**MINUTE OF THE STATUTORY HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF THE
GENERAL COUNCIL HELD ON 28 JUNE 2008, 11.00AM IN
PARLIAMENT HALL,
UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS**

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

The meeting was opened with a prayer by the Acting Principal of St Mary's College.

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Dr Brian Lang welcomed 61 members to the meeting. He also conveyed apologies to the meeting from the Chancellor who was indisposed following surgery earlier in the week.

1. Minutes of the Council's last statutory meeting held on 24 November 2007

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

2. Business Committee

(a) Report of the Committee's meeting held on 29 March 2008

The Council considered and approved the report of the meeting held on 29 March 2008, taking particular note of the following items of business highlighted by the Convener:-

(i) Next meeting of General Council

It was confirmed that the next statutory half-yearly meeting of the Council would be held at 11.00 am on Saturday 22 November 2008. It was noted that the Registrar to General Council would address the meeting on the subject of the plans for the 600th Anniversary Celebrations.

(ii) Election of Members to the Business Committee

It was noted that three nominations had been received in respect of the three vacant places on the Business Committee. To encourage members of the General Council to stand for election in future, it had been agreed that the Development Office would send out an email in February each year to invite nominations and draw attention to the closing date of 31 March.

(iii) **University Admissions Annual Report 2007**

General Council noted that although there had been a 2% fall in applications through UCAS there had been a rise of 7% in overseas applications. The entrance grades had also risen markedly since 2001-2002 and the rejection rate in 2007 was 50% compared to 12% in 2001 and 9% in 2000. In addition the uptake rate in 2007 rose to 27%.

(b) **Membership**

Three vacancies fell due on the Business Committee with effect from 1 July 2008. Nominations were invited and three were received. Accordingly the following individuals were duly elected to serve as members of the Business Committee of the General Council for four years from 1 July 2008.

Mr Nicholas P Robinson, Mr Eliot D Wilson, Mr Alex Yabroff.

General Council recorded their thanks to Mr Edward S A Henley, Dr Martin Lowe and Mr Douglas Mundie who were retiring from the Business Committee.

3. **Committee of the Alumnus Association**

- (a) **Report of meeting held on 12 January 2008** – the Council received and *approved* the report of this committee's meeting held on 12 January 2008. The Convener recorded her thanks to the staff of the Editorial Team of the "Alumnus Chronicle" for their considerable work in preparing a very successful edition. Preparations were in hand for the 2009 Chronicle which would be the 100th edition. The Younger Hall would be the iconic building featured and contributions from Council members would be very welcome.

Over 300 graduates from all over the world were attending the 2008 Re-union Weekend. The graduation dates represented spanned from 1944 – 2007.

- (b) **Future Elections** – It was agreed that elections of members to the Alumnus Association should, in future, run in parallel with the General Council Business Committee elections, with electronic voting, should this be required. Hard copy forms would be made available to those who required them, in advance.

(b) **Membership** – Council required to elect one individual to serve on the Committee of the Alumnus Association.
Two nominations were received as follows:

Dr Bartholomew Tobias Joss and Mr Graeme Ronald Crawford Scott.

Following a show of hands Mr Scott was elected to serve for a period of five years from 1 July 2008.

4. Principal's Address

Dr Brian Lang addressed the Council. The University had just completed another successful week of Graduations. The weather had been unpredictable but all the events had run smoothly and some of the finest graduation addresses had been delivered.

The University continued to flourish but critical times were ahead with the results of the RAE due in December 2008. There were significant financial and reputational implications riding on the results.

The University's financial position remained stable with no cause for immediate concern and no Scottish university, to date, in serious financial crisis.

The preparation of the new Strategic Plan was almost complete, having involved a process of consultation and involvement by members of staff across the institution. The plan would provide the basis for significant building plans; the principal commitments being to the building of a new facility for Medicine at the North Haugh and the redevelopment of the main library. These projects alone were taking the university into a new league in terms of fundraising.

Planning for the 600th Anniversary celebrations was well underway. The Anniversary events would span the period 2011 to 2013; 1411 having been the year teaching had commenced and 1413 the year the Pope had sealed the Bull.

The Principal clarified the position regarding the growth in student numbers, both actual and potential. The University remained committed to keeping the overall population in the region of 7,000 students. However it was important to keep growing the business; therefore the growth had to be smart through partnership arrangements, joint degrees and collaborate programmes. These

arrangements reduced the impact of the number of students within the town and the direct support required for them.

5. New Medical School Building

The Dean of Medicine addressed Council, outlining the vision for a new School of Medicine and Interdisciplinary Medical Research Institute to be built at the North Haugh. This was the largest single capital development in the history of the University. Fundraising had commenced in earnest and had, to date, proceeded well with around £8 million having been secured to date.

Work had commenced on site at the beginning of June and if all progressed to plan the building would be completed for the student intake in September 2010. Student numbers in Medicine would rise to coincide with the availability of the new building but this was planned within the overall student population for the University.

Key features of the new building included the facilities for joint research with a range of science disciplines, flexible teaching space and specialist laboratories for teaching and research. Collaborative research, particularly in medical photonics and virology, would be enhanced through the new facilities.

Plans for the current Bute building had yet to be finalised. There was potential within the space vacated by Medicine for more teaching and research facilities for the Faculty of Arts or potential conversion to residential space.

6. Other Business

(a) Principal's Retiral

Members of General Council formally recorded their thanks and good wishes to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor who was presiding over the last General Council in St Andrews. Members recorded their appreciation for all that Dr Lang had accomplished during his tenure and wished him well for his retirement.

The meeting closed with the pronouncement of the benediction.

Dr Brian Lang
Principal & Vice-Chancellor