



## **Minutes**

Annual Meeting of Convocation held on Thursday 19 November 2015

in the Council Chamber, Queen's University Belfast.

### **1. Meeting**

The Statutory Annual Meeting of Convocation was held at 7pm on Thursday 19 November 2015 with Ms Carol Kinhead (Chair) and 40 other members of Convocation in attendance. The meeting was not quorate and therefore the business of the meeting cannot be officially recognized.

The meeting commenced with the Convocation Lecture by John Larkin QC, Attorney General for Northern Ireland. The title of the lecture was: *What kind of branch? Reflexions on the Court of Justice of the European Union*

Following the lecture the Chair thanked the Attorney on behalf of Convocation and the meeting broke for supper.

### **2. Convocation Studentship**

The Convocation Studentship for 2015 was presented to Alison Meagher, who is pursuing a PhD in Political History, focusing on the impact of diaspora groups on the formulation of United States foreign policy toward Northern Ireland during the Carter administration. Miss Meagher gave a short presentation about her research.

### **3. Apologies**

Apologies had been received by the Clerk of Convocation from 8 members and were duly noted.

### **4. Minutes**

Convocation agreed the Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting held on Thursday 20 November 2014.

## **5. In Memoria**

The Chair asked the members present to stand in silence to acknowledge and remember those members who had died in the period since the previous Annual Meeting in 2014.

## **6. Election of Deputy Chair of Convocation**

A call for nominations for Deputy Chair of Convocation was published in August 2015 with a closing date of 30 October 2015. Nominations were received from:

Prof James Patton Taylor

As the meeting was not quorate, an election could not be held. Electoral Officer Damien Corridan suggested that Prof Taylor be appointed to the role as the election was not contested.

## **7. Election of Members of Standing Committee**

A call for nominations for 4 members of Standing Committee was published in August 2015 with a closing date of 30 October 2015.

By the closing date nominations were received from:

Ciaran Gallagher

Mr Gallagher was appointed as a member of Standing Committee 2016-2018. As the meeting was not quorate and an election could not be held, no further nominations were called for from the floor.

## **8. Report of Standing Committee of Convocation**

### **Meetings**

Standing Committee of Convocation held 4 ordinary meetings in 2015. The under noted table shows the attendance of elected members:

<b>Elected/retire Name</b>		<b>Attendance (Apology)</b>
14/17	Carol Kinhead (Chair)	4 (0)
14/18	Prof James Patton Taylor	3 (1)
14/18	Dr Murray Power	2 (2)
14/18	David McKillen	4 (0)
14/18	Brian Roulston	2 (2)
14/18	Carolyn Forster	3 (1)
15/15	Paul Walsh (co-opted 31 Mar 2015)	3 (1)
15/15	Ciaran Gallager (co-opted 16 Sep 2015)	1 (0)

## **9. Chair's remarks**

Welcome to the 2015 Annual Meeting of Convocation. I would like to offer sincere thanks to all members who sent messages of support, and were unable to attend this evening.

I am pleased to report that during the year the Committee have continued to consult with a number of departments and organisations to highlight and increase awareness of the role of Convocation. Of note was a meeting held on the 17th June between our own Committee and the Committee of Convocation of the Ulster University. There was a useful exchange of ideas and areas of common interest were discussed at length.

I was very privileged to attend the student awards ceremony earlier this year. The event recognises the excellence, achievement and service of exceptional Queen's alumni and students to the life of the University and most importantly to the wider community. It was impressive to witness the valuable voluntary contribution many students are making while continuing to undertake their studies at this University.

During the year there has been a period of significant change within and without the University. Convocation welcome the appointment of our new Chancellor Mr. Tom Moran a renowned international leader and philanthropist. We offer our support to him in his role, alongside our Vice Chancellor Professor Patrick Johnston in ensuring the vision to make Queen's "an international powerhouse in education" is realised.

I report in line with good governance, I continue to represent the views of the members of Convocation at Senate.

I am also pleased to report that Standing Committee of Convocation has continued to develop links with the new President and Officers of the Student's Union, the Post Graduate Office and Departments throughout the University as well as via our Face book site. During the coming years we will continue to develop new ways to reach out to all our members.

I also report that the Convocation Scholarship interviews were held earlier this year and the Standing Committee of Convocation are delighted to announce and award our scholarship for 2015 to Alison Meagher, who is pursuing a PhD in Political History, focusing on the impact of Diaspora groups on the formulation of United States foreign policy toward Northern Ireland during the Carter administration.

I would like to thank all the members of the Standing Committee, the Alumni Office, Postgraduate Office, and our Clerk of Convocation, for their enduring endeavours and support over the past year.

As a Committee I assure you that we are dedicated, and well positioned to continue to challenge issues of concern brought forward by QUB Graduates, and will continue to give this work our highest priority.

Finally, on your behalf I offer sincere thanks to our Attorney General Mr. John Larkin QC who made himself available to deliver this evening's lecture. I hope you enjoyed hearing about the European Courts of Justice (ECJ) (French Cour de Justice) and matters relating to European Union law, and its application across all EU member states. The journey through the composition of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in Luxembourg and Strasbourg, their jurisdictions, different articles and treaties was fascinating.

I look forward to your continued support of the University through the Standing Committee of Convocation, and hope everyone has enjoyed the evening.

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Christmas, and a Peaceful New Year. I look forward to seeing you in 2016.

Carol Kinhead BA (Hons) MSc, PgCHEP

## **10. Use of Delegation of Authority**

Those members of Convocation present approved the delegation of authority to Standing Committee and authorised it to act on its behalf in accordance with statutes until the next Annual Meeting of Convocation.

## **11. Notice of Motions 2015**

### **11.1 In the names of Professor Michael J Larkin and George Dunn**

Proposed by: Professor Michael J Larkin | Seconded by: George Dunn

Convocation supports the re-establishment of a staff common room and associated facilities at Queen's University and that this case is put to the University management alongside a motion to the Senate with a view to improving collegiality for both new and established staff.

#### **Preamble:**

An online petition 'We need a staff common room at Queen's University Belfast' (<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/we-need-a-staff-common-room-at-queensuniversity>) has collected 243 signatures. Queen's University for many years had an active staff common room where the Student Guidance Centre is now. But it was closed under the last VC with no replacement. We need one so that staff from different parts of the university - new and established - can come together in the interests of collegiality.

An informal vote was taken via show of hands and a unanimous vote in favour of the motion received.

### **11.2 In the names of Benjamin Christman and Sean Fearon**

Proposed by: Benjamin Christman | Seconded by: Sean Fearon

Asks Queen's University Belfast to commit to immediately freeze any new investments, and the complete withdrawal of any existing investments by 2020, in:

- (a) Companies whose main business is the extraction and/or production of fossil fuels, and,
- (b) Any commingled, or mutual funds that contain fossil fuel holdings.

#### **Preamble:**

This motion asks QUB to divest from fossil fuel companies. QUB currently invests in fossil fuel companies such as Shell and BP – it is estimated that QUB currently has fossil fuel investments of ~£3m. The actions of these businesses are at odds with a safe climate future for humanity; and the investments contradict QUB's values and the fundamental purposes of a university - enlightenment and investment in the future of students.

An informal vote was taken via show of hands: 14 in favour, 12 against, 5 abstentions

**12. Date of Next Annual Meeting**

Convocation agreed to hold its next meeting on Thursday 17 November 2016 in the Council Chamber.

*24 November 2015*

*C. Kinkead BA (Hons.) MSc, PgCHEP*  
**Chair of Convocation**