

**MINUTE OF THE COURT MEETING (UC)
UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS
HELD ON TUESDAY 20th MARCH 2012
AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE, INVERNESS
AT 11:00 HRS**

PRESENT: Professor Matthew MacIver (Chair)
Jack Watson
Garry Sutherland exit 1pm
James Fraser
Janet Hackel
Professor Anton Edwards
Professor Donald MacRae
Professor Kenneth Miller
Dr Bruce Nelson
Michael Gibson
Dr Fiona Skinner
Eileen Mackay
Nathan Shields
Thomas Prag from 12:22
Norman Sharp
Murray McCheyne
Dr Alistair Mair
Hugh Morison
Penny Brodie
Niall Smith
Iain Scott
Dr Michael Foxley
Joe Moore

IN ATTENDANCE: Garry Coutts
Dr Gordon Jenkins
Martin Wright
Fiona Larg
Lorna MacDonald
Dr Crichton Lang
Dr Jeff Howarth
Nuala Boyle
Roger Sendall (minutes)

APOLOGIES: Dr Jana Hutt
Dr Brian Chaplin
Wilma Campbell
Euan Smith
Aideen O'Malley
Professor Bill McKelvey
Andy Rogers
Rt Hon Lord William Prosser
Ertie Nicholson
Allan Wishart

ITEM	ACTION
1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Welcome and Quorum.	
It was noted that a quorum was present.	
1.2 Declarations of Interest: None	
1.3 Notification of other business: None.	
2 MINUTES	
2.1 Approval of Minutes.	
The Court resolved to approve the minutes of the special meeting held on 22 nd February 2012 (UC12-005).	
2.2 Matters Arising.	
Court noted the paper UC12-006.	
3 CHAIRMAN/PRINCIPAL COMMENTS	
3.1 News and events round up (UC12-007)	
Court noted the content of the above paper.	
Court received a verbal report from the Principal and Vice Chancellor. The following points were highlighted;	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal was pleased to introduce Nuala Boyle to the Court. It was noted that Nuala had recently been appointed as the university's Head of Development. • The Principal had attended a meeting with Mr Fergus Ewing of the Scottish Government in connection with possible involvement with significant marine and other renewable energy projects. The projects were currently at an early stage and further progress would be reported in due course. • The Principal had given a presentation to the Inverness Campus Partnership Forum in February. The forum was chaired by Cabinet Secretary John Swinney outlining proposals to develop a research hub on the Beechwood site. It was noted that this presentation had been very well received and that there was considerable support for the initiative. • The Principal had been assisting the Commission for Rural Education in an examination of schools provision in remote areas of the western highlands that were under threat of closure. The Principal reported that Rothesay campus school had been of particular interest since the head teacher had successfully developed a fully integrated teaching model their linking nursery education with primary and secondary schooling and to FE and HE provision through a direct link with Argyll 	

College.

- The Principal and Secretary had attended the SCDI Annual Forum in St Andrews.
- The Principal had visited the University of Corsica who were reported to be in a similar position to UHI in terms of delivering learning to a dispersed community. It was noted that Corsica were extremely interested in the UHI model and that considerable opportunity existed for knowledge transfer and academic exchange programmes between the two universities particularly in areas such as rural sustainability.
- It was noted that a ceremony to confirm and celebrate the appointment of HRH the Princess Royal as Chancellor was planned for 7th June. In addition, it was noted that any requests for the Chancellor to attend specific events at APs within the period September 2012 to January 2013 should be provided to the Principal before the end of March.

The Chairman reported that he had recently been invited to attend a meeting with the Director General of the BBC. It was noted that the Chairman would raise an issue about a lack of media focus on issues that were taking place to the north of the central belt and that he would highlight the forthcoming event to install HRH as Chancellor in an effort to secure some positive media coverage for the university.

3.2 Committee members – Preferred email addresses (UC12:008)

Court considered the content of the above paper. It was noted that members could contact Roger Sendall or the UHI helpdesk for assistance with accessing the Court website or for help to forward UHI emails to a private account.

4 COMMITTEES & MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Fellowships Committee.

The Principal and Vice Chancellor reported that he had consulted with members of the Fellowships Committee with regard to identifying appropriate candidates for the award of University Fellowships to be presented on 7th June by HRH.

The Court approved a recommendation of the Committee to award Fellowships to Colin MacKay and Professor Robert Cormack.

5 GOVERNANCE

5.1 Options for Change

5.1.1 Update on Cabinet Secretary model

Following the last meeting of Court the Principal had written to the Cabinet Secretary and to the SFC to formally request sight of proposals that SFC were drafting in accordance with the tri-umvirate model proposed by the Cabinet Secretary at the meeting of 31st January 2012 to be provided in time for consideration at this meeting.

The Secretary explained that the proposals had not been provided to date and that the SFC was currently working on developing the model. The SFC appeared to be in “listening mode” presently and Jude Henderson of the SFC had recently met with a group of independent governors, with staff governors and with the President of UHISA for the purposes of consultation prior to developing proposals.

It was unclear as regards whether a model proposal would be made available by the SFC before the next meeting of AP Chairs and Principal's with the Cabinet Secretary planned for 16th April in Inverness.

5.1.2 Transformation Implementation Group (TIG) and Transition/Transformation Director

Court considered the paper UC12-009 prepared by the Secretary setting out a proposed remit and structure for the TIG to be established for the purpose of progressing recommendations from the Capita report.

It was agreed that the matter should be considered in tandem with paper UC12-010 that had also been prepared by the Secretary outlining a proposed job description and person specification for a senior manager to lead the transformation programme.

It was agreed that this new post should be called Transformation Programme Director not Transition Programme Director. The Secretary explained that the post had been presented to court as Transition Programme Director to avoid risk of an appeal by former employees who had been made redundant and who had had the word transformation within their job titles. Court noted that this was an entirely new post with wholly different responsibilities and on that basis it was agreed that the post should be termed Transformation Programme Director.

A summary of the key points highlighted by the discussion and agreed actions is outlined below in bullet format;

- Court unanimously agreed that the University Chairman should serve as Chair of TIG. The remainder of the membership would be appointed on the basis of the particular skills and experience required and would follow the appointment of the Transformation Programme Director, however, it was noted that the Chair would welcome expressions of interest as soon as possible.
- It was agreed that membership of TIG would not include a Dean. Academic input would be provided by a Vice Principal. The university Deans were already fully deployed and would be better engaged with assisting individual workstreams managed by TIG.
- It was agreed that membership of TIG must include student representation.
- It was noted that whilst there was reported broad agreement for Option 8, there was currently no clear agreement on individual recommendations. Therefore the first task of TIG would be to clarify and identify which of the Capita recommendations to take forward.
- It was agreed that the person specification document and job description for the post of Transformation Programme Director should be significantly enhanced given the required task and the need for strong leadership qualities. It was noted that the proposed salary would need to be increased to attract the correct calibre individual. The specification document should refer to the specific workstreams listed in the TIG remit.
- It was agreed that consideration should be given to appointing a second transformation post to assist the Director. It was noted that this and the increased level of the Director post would have financial implications, however, it was agreed

Secretary

that it was important to invest in this project for the long term future of the university. It was noted that a bid for transformation funding would be progressed with SFC.

- It was noted that efforts should be made to appoint a Transformation Programme Director as soon as possible.

5.2 Review of Disclosures

Court noted the paper UC12-011 prepared by the Secretary providing a report on disclosure arrangements and procedures at each AP. Court noted that assurances that procedures were in place had been received from all APs with the exception of HTC. It was reported that HTC was currently reviewing procedures and that further information would be provided shortly.

Secretary

5.3 Report from UHI Foundation

No report. Foundation had not met since the last Court meeting.

5.4 Report from UHISA

The President of UHISA reported that he would be standing down at the end of June 2012 following completion of his second term. This was the maximum term permitted in accordance with the UHISA constitution. It was noted that the current Vice President of UHISA Katrina Paton had been elected to serve as President from July 2012.

The election result for a new Vice President was currently unresolved.

Court thanked the President for his outstanding contribution to Court and to UHI students in developing a firm foundation for UHISA of which the Court could be proud.

5.4.1 New UHISA Constitution

Court considered the proposed new UHISA constitution document UC12-012 that had been approved by the Student Council on 4th November 2011.

It was noted that in accordance with Article 17 of the university's Articles of Association that Court was required to approve the UHISA constitution before it became effective.

A small number of minor points were raised relating to contracts and grievance procedures contained within the draft document. It was agreed to approve the document pending a review of these points by the HR department.

UHISA

5.5 High Level Risk Register (HLRR)

Enter T Prag

Court considered the HLRR (UC12-013) incorporating amendments agreed at the meeting of the Risk Review Group (RRG) on 7th March 2012.

The Chair of RRG reported that considerable progress had been made with regard to sharing risk information and all APs had now provided RRG with copies of their HLRRs. This exercise had highlighted a variety of approaches to recording risks across APs and RRG considered that there would be considerable merit in working towards a model approach for risk management throughout the partnership. RRG felt that the management and monitoring of strategic risks should ideally be undertaken by the Executive Board and

it was noted that the Finance Directors Practitioners Group (FDPG) would be asked to consider the appetite for developing a consistent model approach to risk management through the Executive Board.

In addition the Chair of RRG was pleased to report the positive involvement of Ian Neilson, Finance Director of Perth College who had kindly agreed to join RRG and who had attended his first meeting on 7th March.

Court noted significant changes to the HLRR highlighted in blue text and agreed that the score for new risk (number 15) should be increased to the maximum score of 5*5=25 given the significant challenge of recruiting additional ftes at short notice and the political sensitivities associated with additional funding for UHI when FE and other HE budgets were under severe pressure.

Secretary

5.6 Annual Monitoring Report (UC12-014)

Court noted the above annual monitoring report relating to student & general complaints, public interest disclosures, UHISA activity, Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act enquiries for the academic year 2010/11.

5.7 UHI Annual Health & Safety Report (UC12-015)

Court noted the report prepared by the UHI Health and Safety Advisor for the period September 2010 to September 2011.

5.8 Executive Office Annual Health & Safety Report (UC12-016)

Court noted the report prepared by the Executive Office Facilities Manager.

6 FINANCE & PLANNING

6.1 Finance Report – Reforecast of outturn to 31st July 2012 (UC12-017)

Court noted the above report prepared by the Director of Finance.

It was noted that the report did not include any transformational funding.

Answering a question about the (£21k) attributed for Beechwood Campus, the Secretary confirmed that this money was being used to progress plans for the development of a research hub on the site in accordance with the Estates Strategy agreed by Court in 2009. It was noted that this project which had been the subject of the Principals presentation to the Campus Forum reported at section 3.1 above was a separate development but complementary to the Inverness College campus development.

It was noted that a copy of the Estates strategy would be circulated to members following the meeting.

Secretary

6.2 European Structural Funds – Investing in Recovery (UC12-018)

Court noted the above paper prepared by the Finance Manager providing an update on progress with the above project since August 2011.

6.3 Management Accounts to 31st January 2012

It was noted that Court wished to commend the Finance Director for the preparation of an

extremely clear and well-presented set of management accounts.

7 ACADEMIC

7.1 ELIR visit

The Vice Principal Academic provided Court with a verbal report relating to the ELIR process.

It was noted that the part 1 visit had progressed very well and that the ELIR panel would be returning the following week for the part 2 visit. It was understood that the part 2 visit would focus on interviews with PGR students, teaching staff and supervisors. It was noted a full report on the ELIR process would be provided to Court in due course.

VP
Academic

7.2 Retention of Students

Court received a verbal report from Professor Norman Sharp on the above subject. It was noted that Professor Sharp had met with Dr Fotheringham the previous day to discuss the content of future monitoring reports for Court.

It was noted that work was progressing to identify a number of appropriate benchmark data sets that would enable Court to make an assessment of institutional performance and to monitor trends in the area of student retention and withdrawal that would be more informative than HESA statistics.

It was noted that Court would be provided with a formal annual report in addition to regular updates on progress.

Dr
Fotheringham

7.3 Ballet West – Update

The Vice Principal Academic provided Court with a verbal report in connection with the decision to cease activities at Ballet West.

It was noted that all UHI students at Ballet West had been invited to attend an interview with university staff to discuss their situation and to identify appropriate transition arrangements for themselves.

In addition Court noted that the Internal Auditor had been directed to conduct a “lessons learnt” investigation into the issue by the Audit Committee in accordance with Courts earlier request.

7.4 Academic Development & 2012/13 Budget Framework

Court received a powerpoint presentation by the Principal on the above subject. A copy of the presentation is appended to and forms a part of this minute.

Significant points highlighted by the presentation were;

- There was potential for additional recurrent income for the of around £10m per annum dependent on the success of achieving additional student number targets agreed with SFC.
- Academic Partners wished to receive the bulk of additional funding in the form of an increased Unit of Resource (UOR) to be distributed via the RAM.
- Opportunity existed to use a proportion of the money for targeted strategic

development initiatives such as for developing the curriculum, supporting research, marketing the university and enhancing academic leadership.

The Chairman thanked the Principal for his report and it was noted that this matter and strategic priorities would be considered in greater detail by the Court at the next meeting.

Principal

7.5 Schools Liaison (UC12-019)

Court considered the above report prepared by the Director of Marketing, Communications and Planning setting out current arrangements for schools liaison activity by APs. It was noted that considerable scope existed to better coordinate activities and it was agreed that the Court would be appraised of progress on a regular basis.

Director of Marketing, Comms and Planning

8 REPORTS AND CIRCULARS

8.1 Governance Reviews

Court noted the following reports provided within the appendix to the Court papers;

- Report of the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland
- Report of the Review of Further Education Governance in Scotland

8.2 SFC Circulars

Court noted the circulars issued by the SFC since the last meeting.

8.3 Reports from Committees of the Court

Court noted the minutes of the following meetings contained within the appendix to the Court papers;

Finance and General Purposes Committee of 25th January & 7th March 2012
 Audit Committee of 6th March 2012
 Academic Council of 8th December 2011
 Executive Board of 15th & 23rd February 2012
 Risk Review Group of 7th March 2012
 Health Safety Committee of 1st March 2012
 EO Health, Safety and Environmental Committee of 27th February 2012

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Research Degree Awarding Powers (rDAP)

The Chair of SAMS requested that the university undertake an urgent review of UHI research activities and outline a clear strategy and timeline for achieving rDAP. Court noted this request.