

**MINUTES OF THE COURT MEETING (UC)
UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH 2016 AT 12:00 HRS
IN ROOM EO1, EXECUTIVE OFFICE, NESS WALK, INVERNESS**

PRESENT: Garry Coutts (Chair)
Professor Fiona McLean (Vice Chair)
Professor Clive Mulholland (UHI Principal and Vice-chancellor)
Dr Michael Foxley – (Chair of UHI FE Regional Board)
Dr David Alston
Willie Printie
Angus Ross
Malcolm Burr (VC)
Luke Humberstone
James MacDonald
Iseabail Mactaggart
Gillian Berkeley
Dr David Worthington
Eileen Mackay
Andy Rogers
Peter Campbell (VC)
Anton Edwards

IN ATTENDANCE: Dr Jeff Howarth (Vice Principal Enterprise)
Professor Ian Bryden (Vice Principal Research & Specialist)
Mike Devenney – VC (Vice Principal Further Education)
Professor Crichton Lang (Deputy Principal)
Fiona Larg (Chief Operating Officer & Secretary COOS)
Professor Neil Simco (in part)
Roger Sendall (Corporate Governance Manager)

APOLOGIES: Lorna Stanger
Professor Kenneth Miller

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 any other Business: None.	
1.4	Starring. The following items were starred for discussion 5.3, 5.4, 6.2, 6.3, 7.2 and 7.6.	

2 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

2.1 Approval of Court Minutes

The Court resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2016 (UC15-121).

2.2 Matters Arising

The Court considered the Matters Arising paper UC16-001. The following points were noted:

Item 1 CPIs – Court agreed to establish a small subgroup comprising of the Chair of Court, Vice Chair of Court and Chair of the Audit Committee to work with the Head of Marketing and Planning to review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the University's agreed Critical Performance Indicators (CPIs) and underlying KPIs.

COOS

Item 2 – Effectiveness Review – The COOS undertook to develop a brief and to obtain a quotation for an independent review of Court effectiveness as required by the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. It was agreed that the group established under Item 1 above be authorised to review and approve the brief as they deemed appropriate.

COOS

2.3 Minutes from Committees of Court

The Court reviewed the draft minutes of the following committee meetings:

- UC16-002 Finance and General Purposes Committee of 3rd March 2016
- UC16-003 Audit Committee of 16th March 2016
- UC16-004 Further Education Regional Board of 10th February 2016
- UC16-005 Academic Council of 9th December 2015
- UC16-006 Remuneration Committee of 18th December 2015

The following points were highlighted:

- The Audit Committee highlighted the benefits of Court and FERB demonstrating good leadership by embracing and promoting the core values of the newly formed Strategic Working Group in terms of openness and transparency in all activities including the timeous sharing of internal audit reports, risk and financial information.
- The Audit Committee and FGPC had both welcomed the introduction of a new issues log report to complement existing risk report. The Audit Committee also fully supported a proposal from the recent risk management workshop to offer APs the opportunity to provide a narrative quarterly report for Court in relation to their top three risks/concerns. This was a welcome development and it was agreed that Court and FERB regularly highlight good practice in an effort to improve compliance across the whole partnership.
- The Audit Committee had been pleased to note that the overall completion rate in relation to agreed management actions had improved, however, the committee remained concerned that one high priority action in relation to implementing compulsory Information Security training across the partnership remained long overdue. This was regarded as unacceptable. It was noted that this action had a revised completion date of June 2016.

- It was noted that FERB and Audit had highlighted a desire amongst members to hold a fuller discussion about university marketing and student recruitment policies. It was agreed to add this as a starred item on Courts June agenda.
- It was noted that FERB had requested to receive high level or exception reports from APs that would enable them to focus attention on key issues as opposed to monitoring routine data. It was noted that FERB had requested the FDPG group to develop a series of high level reports for future FERB meetings in consultation with FEEB.
- FERB would receive a full report in relation to the impact of National Bargaining on assigned colleges at its next meeting.
- Academic Council had requested that Court approve a recommendation from the Council to expand the membership of the Council to include the following roles: Dean of Students, Academic Registrar and Dean of Research. Whilst this recommendation was approved in principle it was noted that this action may require an increase in staff membership as per the Articles of Association and it was noted that the Deputy Principal would liaise with the COOS in relation to progressing the recommendation.

HGRM

DP/COOS

3 CHAIRMAN/PRINCIPALS COMMENTS

The Chair and the Principal and Vice Chancellor each provided Court with a verbal report in relation to their recent activities. The following points were noted:

- The HE Governance Bill had been passed by the Scottish Government and would become Law in due course. It was noted that Court would undertake a review of staff and student memberships of executive committees in June 2016 to ensure compliance with the new Act.
- The Court congratulated Luke Humberstone and Maria Roberts on their re-election to HISA. It was noted that Gale Scott had been elected as a new FE representative. The Court recorded its gratitude to Lorna Stanger for her excellent contribution to HISA and the University over the past 12 months. It was noted that the Chair would write a personal note to Lorna.
- Court was pleased to note the announcement in relation to the City Deal that would provide around £315M of investment for the region. This was excellent news for the Highlands and Islands and for the University with the opportunity to benefit as a key delivery partner through developments such as a School of Health and Graduate Medical school.
- The University was working with Perth College UHI to refresh its international strategy.
- The NSS opened on 8th February. At 9th March UHI had a response rate of 58% which is an increase on last year's position as this time (55%). The UK average response rate is currently 45.4%. This is good news because evidence suggests that a higher response rate leads to a better outcome, however, we should not be complacent. NSS results were disappointing last year and our strategic aim and CPI is to achieve a score of 2% above the Scottish average overall satisfaction rate. Court noted the process of establishing an NSS Strategic Steering Group with the following remit: To identify internal good practices to improve NSS scores; To

COOS

Chair

identify areas of weakness to be addressed to improve NSS scores; and to make recommendations to QAEC to continuously improve NSS scores in line with the university's strategy and the critical performance indicator for NSS.

- Success of UHI Golf Team – The UHI Golf team have beaten St Andrews and are now into the final of the British Universities golf championship playing against Stirling next month.

In December the University and the PGA unveiled a new partnership aimed at enhancing educational opportunities in Scotland for those eager to pursue a career in golf. Students are able to take either a BA Honours Degree in Professional Golf or in Golf Management at the University's Dornoch base next to the world-renowned Royal Dornoch Golf Club. The University also has a new Diploma in Higher Education in Professional Golf which will be studied while students are in work at Scottish golf facilities. These courses are aimed at those aspiring to a career in the golf industry which in Scotland is estimated to support the employment of more than 20,000 people.

4 COMMITTEE & MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Strategy Working Group

Court noted that the Strategy working Group had met on two occasions to date with another meeting planned for 7th April. Work was progressing well, the group was consulting widely with internal and external stakeholders including meetings with SFC and HIE and further progress would be reported to Court in June.

5 STRATEGY & PLANNING

5.1 Residences Project

Court noted paper UC16-007 providing an update on progress with Phase 1 residences currently under construction in Inverness and Fort William.

It was noted that proposals for Phase 2 were currently being developed and that a special meeting of FGPC/Court may be convened in April to consider Phase 2 approvals.

5.2 ESIF Update & Forward Strategy

Court noted paper UC16-008.

5.3 UHI Work Based learning Hub Developments

Court noted paper UC16-009 providing an update on the activities of the UHI work based learning Hub.

It was noted that the Vice Chair would liaise with the Vice Principal FE to discuss access routes and marketing of courses to school leavers.

5.4 Scenario Planning

Court considered paper UC16-010 and agreed that it provided an excellent basis for dealing with the practical aspects of a corporate failure. It was felt that some additional work should be undertaken to link actions with business continuity processes and to address any legal issues.

VPFE

6 GOVERNANCE

6.1 Updates Delegated Authorities Schedule

Court approved paper UC16-011 as recommended by FGPC.

6.2 Academic Partner Financial Monitoring

Court noted paper UC16-012 providing an update report in relation to the financial position of three academic partner colleges (Moray, SAMS and North Highland).

6.3 rDAP

The Deputy Principal reported that the University had received and commented upon the rDAP Scrutiny Panel draft report. It was noted that the final report would be completed in April and submitted to ACDAP for consideration and decision in May 2016.

6.4 Departmental reports

It was noted that Court members had found the first departmental reports extremely useful and informative. It was agreed that future reports should be provided in accordance with a phased approach so as to limit the volume of information received at any one time. It was suggested that an introductory note containing 4 or 5 key bullet points would also be appreciated.

6.5 HE Governance Bill Update

Court noted paper UC16-013 providing an update provided by Universities Scotland in relation to progress with the Bill through the Scottish Parliament.

6.6 Information Security – Incident Report

Court noted paper UC16-014 providing a summary report in relation to three separate data protection issues at Inverness, Moray and North Highland colleges and highlighting the University's compliance responsibilities in accordance with the eight data protection principles.

7 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE

7.1 Performance Dashboards for Academic Partners

Court noted paper UC16-015.

Exit G
Berkeley
& M Burr
14:00

7.2 2015-16 Q2 Re-forecast & Management Accounts

The Court approved paper UC16-016 comprising the Q2 reforecast for 2015/16 based on the University's management accounts for the period ended 31st January 2016 (UC16-016a).

The Chair of SAMS explained that he had received a note from an Academic Partner Principal expressing concern in relation to £1.7M of HE RAM funding that would be subject to claw back by EO. The University partnership was understood to have met its SFC student number target (within 2% tolerance) and therefore would not be subject to any claw back by SFC. The AP Principal had expressed concern that this was an unfair situation with APs experiencing a disproportionate level of pain.

The Director of Corporate Services explained that HE RAM payments to individual APs were linked to the achievement of the agreed PPF student number targets and that all APs who had met their targets had been allocated the full level of funding. Court noted that it would not be appropriate to distribute HE funds when targets had not been achieved. Indeed, the established protocol of funds following students was considered to be an important mechanism for the University in terms of student planning. There would not be any claw back of allocated funds by EO. The £1.7M referred to was actually unallocated RAM resulting from missed PPF targets and this would be used to support strategic investments for the benefit of the whole University partnership such as the recent decision to invest £900k in updating IT infrastructure. None of the HE RAM grant would be retained by EO to support central services as was suggested. Indeed EO was currently seeking to develop its budget for 2016/17 and a reduction of approximately £575K was anticipated. It was noted that the issues highlighted would be discussed at the next meeting of the Finance Directors Practitioners Group (FDPG).

DoCS

It was noted that Court wished to consider issues relating to any failures to achieve HE student number targets at its next meeting.

COOS

7.3 2016-17 Indicative Budget

Court noted paper UC16-017.

7.4 2016/17 Regional Outcome Agreement

Court approved paper UC16-018.

7.5 Critical Performance Indicators

Court considered paper UC16-019 providing an update on the University's CPIs with a March 2016 reporting schedule. It was noted that a sub group to review the appropriateness of CPIs had been established at item 2.2 above.

7.6 HE Student Numbers

Court noted paper UC16-020.

8 ACADEMIC BUSINESS

8.1 /8.2 Transfer of Pre-Registration Nurse Training & UHI School of Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

The Principal provided a brief presentation to members in connection with the proposed transfer of pre-registration nurse training from the University of Stirling to UHI and some significant potential opportunities to link this new core activity with strategic investments taking best advantage of development grants from ESIF, HIE and the City Deal.

It was noted that the business model for the nursing transfer was currently being developed and that special meetings of FGPC and Court would be convened in May to consider the proposals more fully.

Deputy
Principal

8.3 Update on Athena swan Bronze Institutional Accreditation

Court noted paper UC16-021.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 Corporate Risk Register

Court considered paper UC16-022.

10 REPORTS

10.1 HISA

Court received a verbal report from the President of HISA covering recent activities including the results of the recent student elections and the appointment of an Association Director.

10.2 Foundation Report

Court received a verbal report from the Rector. It was noted that Foundation was currently running a new membership campaign and that early results were encouraging with considerable interest being attracted.

It was noted that a Foundation conference would be hosted by SMO in Skye on 22nd April.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 15th June 2016. Meeting to be held at Perth College UHI.