

**MINUTES OF THE COURT MEETING (UC)
UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 OCTOBER 2016 AT 15:00 HRS
IN ROOM EO1, NESS WALK, INVERNESS**

PRESENT: Garry Coutts (Chair)
Professor Clive Mulholland (UHI Principal and Vice-chancellor)
Dr Michael Foxley – (Chair of UHI FE Regional Board) VC
Professor Fiona McLean (Vice Chair)
Eileen Mackay (VC)
Andy Rogers (VC)
Angus Ross (VC)
Anton Edwards (VC)
Dr David Worthington (VC)
Luke Humberstone
Peter Campbell (VC)
Professor Kenneth Miller (VC)
Dr David Alston

IN ATTENDANCE: Fiona Larg (Chief Operating Officer & Secretary(COOS)) (VC)
Professor Ian Bryden (Vice Principal Research & Specialist)
Irene Peterson – VC (Vice Principal Further Education) (VC)
Crichton Lang (Deputy Principal) in part
Dr Jeff Howarth (Vice Principal Enterprise)
Fraser Durie (Principal of Argyll College UHI) in part
John Maher (Director of LIS)/Tracey Cruikshank Customer Service Manager)
in part
Roger Sendall (Head of Governance & Records Management)

APOLOGIES: Willie Printie
James MacDonald
Gill Berkeley
Malcolm Burr
Iseabail Mactaggart

ITEM	INTRODUCTION	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. Appointment of NHC Chair & City Deal.	

1.4 STUDENT PORTAL DEMONSTRATION

Court received a demonstration of the new student portal from the UHI LIS Customer Service Manager. It was noted that the portal had been well received by students across the partnership and was actively contributing to an enhanced student experience.

1.5 SCHOOLS LIAISON PRESENTATION

Court received a presentation from the Principal of Argyll College UHI in relation to the activities of the University's Regional Skills Group in relation to enhancing links with schools and creating new opportunities for progression to FE and HE programmes. It was noted that approximately 30 final year school pupils were currently participating in a pilot to deliver credit bearing UG modules through UHI and that considerable work was progressing to develop and expand new quality materials. There was a need to determine how much resource the University would commit to further developing links with schools and marketing of UHI to schools within the region and a paper on this subject would be presented to HEPARC on 18th October. It was noted that Court considered that this was a critically important strategic issue for the University and that Court wished to receive regular progress reports with a next update due in March 2017.

2 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

2.1 Approval of Court Minutes

The Court resolved to approve the minutes of the following meetings subject to minor amendment:

- 14th September 2016 (UC16-074)
- 16th September 2016 (UC16-075)
- 19th September 2016 (UC16-076)

2.2 Matters Arising

The Court noted the Matters Arising paper UC16-077.

City Deal: The Vice Principal Enterprise reported that the Inverness Region City Deal project was developing at a rapid pace. The University had previously approved a high level commitment to participation in the initiative with potential to deliver around £9M of investment opportunities. More detailed information and specific recommendations would be presented to Court for consideration in due course.

SAMS Loan request: Court noted that SAMS had been asked to provide clarification on a number of points. This information was pending and dialogue was continuing.

2.3 Review of Delegated Decisions: None

2.4 Minutes from Committees of Court

The Court reviewed the minutes of the following committee meetings:

- Finance and General Purposes Committee 8th September 2016 UC16-056
- Further Education Regional Board 7th September 2016 UC16-058

The following points were highlighted:

- **Moray College Recovery Plan:** Court noted that the COOS and DoCR had recently met with Moray College staff in an effort to assist development of an appropriate recovery plan incorporating cost savings and income opportunities through curriculum investment that would see the college return to a stable position within 3 to 5 years. Some concerns had been identified in relation to a lack of ambition within the college to implement changes and further work was continuing. It was noted that the Principal of Moray College had not yet met with the principals of the other four incorporated colleges to coordinate budget activity in the context of the need for these colleges to retain a surplus to offset the forecast deficit position at Moray College. Court noted that this meeting was required as a matter of some urgency and it was noted that the final proposed recovery plan should be submitted to FERB and FGPC for approval and comment in November.
- Court was pleased to note that SFC had provided additional funding of £1.1M to address the implementation of National Bargaining also that the Chair of FERB had received a communication from the SFC suggesting that a recurrent uplift of £400k in rurality funding was forthcoming.

3 CHAIRMAN/PRINCIPALS COMMENTS

The Principal & Vice Chancellor was delighted to report that the University had been chosen to deliver Scotland's first Graduate Medical Programme in company with the universities of Dundee and St Andrews. The Scottish Graduate Entry Medical Programme (ScotGEM) is a four-year programme that could accommodate up to 50 students per year, starting in the academic year 2018/19 subject to approval from the General Medical Council. The programme will have a particular focus on recruitment of Scottish graduates to increase the likelihood of trainees remaining in Scotland, particularly in more rural and remote areas.

4 COMMITTEES & MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Strategy Working Group – Update on Progress (*item discussed as last agenda item*)

Court noted paper UC16-078 comprising the draft notes of a meeting between UHI, Academic Partners and Scottish Ministers held on 23rd September 2016. The Chair then provided members with a verbal update on recent developments and activities that were currently progressing in advance of a second meeting with Scottish Ministers planned for Monday 17th October. The following key points were noted:

- On 23rd September the Deputy First Minister established a non-executive sub group comprising Marlene Wood (Independent Chair of the SWG), John Kemp (Acting

CEO of SFC), Garry Coutts Chair of Court, Michael Foxley Chair of FERB, Angus Ross and Grant Myles to: Design a senior management team structure for the University, which is to be signed off by the University Principal & Vice Chancellor and all academic partner principals; Design a communication and relationship-building programme for across the Partnership; and to define responsibilities and accountabilities for decision-making, going forward, across the partnership with a view to achieving agreement and final sign off by 17th October.

- The DFM had resisted requests to expand membership of the sub group to include any staff or student representation preferring instead to remit the group to consult and involve others if particular knowledge and participation was considered necessary by the group members. The subgroup had met on three occasions to date and whilst some progress had been achieved, no final agreement had been reached and tensions remained.
- A further meeting of the sub group was planned for 12th October that would include participation of the University's Principal & Vice Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer & Secretary and two AP Principals (Lydia Rohmer of WHC and Donald Macbeath of NHC) all of whom were members of the original SWG established by Court. This group would be asked to review a matrix setting out the broad areas of agreement and disagreement with a view to identifying agreed solutions.
- Court noted that the group established by the DFM had no status or authority to compel the University to act or implement its recommendations, however, the DFM was an important stakeholder of the University who wanted it to succeed and on this basis it was important for the University to engage in the current process and it was therefore important to ensure that Court was fully briefed on all developments timeously and able to contribute appropriately to the process.
- In order to ensure that the University's position could be clearly articulated and considered by the sub-group the Principal and Vice Chancellor had prepared two documents setting out the fundamental principles that he felt should underpin the decision making process and a proposed amended composition and responsibilities of the University's senior management team. These papers were tabled for consideration by Court and would be presented to the next subgroup meeting.
- The University is an autonomous institution and concern was expressed that Scottish Ministers were interfering in independent management structures that were beyond their remit also that this focus was detracting from the original purpose of the SWG which was to address significant financial sustainability challenges such as removing the incorporated colleges from ONS requirements and exposure to VAT. Further, it was not appropriate for a non-executive group established by a third party to prescribe the composition of the University's senior management team without the direct involvement and support of the University's Principal & Vice Chancellor or independent Court member involvement.
- Many of the issues and behaviours identified as problems by the SWG and stakeholder groups result from inconsistent terms and conditions across multiple partners, it was stated that stakeholders are seeking to develop a university that is greater than the sum of its parts not a "multiversity" and that the opportunity to seek financial assistance from government to address this fundamental inconsistency which creates a barrier to career development and partnership working should not be missed.

The following actions and points were agreed:

- The Chair would request that an independent member of the University Court be invited to join the DFMs subgroup.
- Court fully endorsed the position articulated by the Principal & Vice Chancellor within the two papers tabled at the meeting setting out the fundamentals principles and rationale for decision making and a suggested amended senior management structure.

5 STRATEGY & PLANNING

5.1 Impact of Brexit on UHI

Court considered paper UC16-062 providing an overview of the potential impact of Brexit on the University prepared by the Director of European and International Development.

Court noted that subsequent to the paper being circulated that the UK's Chancellor had issued a further statement to provide assurance that all EU funded activities and projects that received approval prior to the UK leaving the EU would be fully funded by the Treasury.

Court noted that there was a need to lobby government to ensure that the institutions reliance on EU funding was fully understood and to seek assurances that the decision to exit the EU would not be of any detriment to the future development and prospects of the University.

Court agreed to establish a small subgroup to consider long term risks, potential opportunities and mitigating actions. Group composition to include (Chair, Principal, VPE, VPRS, Eileen Mackay).

Enter
CWL
16:05

6 GOVERNANCE

6.1 Academic Partner Financial Monitoring

Court noted paper UC16-063 providing a summary of the Financial Forecast Returns from the 8 UHI Assigned Colleges and projections from 5 non-assigned colleges.

6.2 ICO Investigation

Court noted paper UC16-064.

7 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE

7.1 Executive Office Indicative Year End Position

Court noted paper UC16-066.

7.2 Academic Partner Dashboards

Court noted paper UC16-067.

7.3 Critical Performance Indicators

Court considered papers UC16-068a and UC16-068b providing an update on the work of the KPI subgroup.

7.4 Student Numbers Final 2015/16 Position and 2016/17 Forecast

Court noted paper UC16-069.

8 ACADEMIC BUSINESS

8.1 UHI School of Health Social Care and Wellbeing

Court received a presentation from the Deputy Principal in relation to progress with establishing the UHI School of Health, Social Care and Wellbeing.

A copy of the presentation is appended to this minute

8.2 Athena Swan

The Vice Principal Research and Specialist advised with regret that the University's application for Athena Swan accreditation had narrowly failed to meet the criteria, however, the University had helpfully been advised on the reasons for this failure and had been invited to address these points quickly and to submit a new application for accreditation in November.

8.3 Red Button Annual Report 2015/16

Court noted the above report paper UC16-071.

8.4 National Student Survey Results 2015/16

Court noted paper UC16-072.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 Corporate Risk Register

Court noted paper UC16-073.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 NHC CHAIR APPOINTMENT

Court approved the appointment of Mr Blair Sandison as Chair of North Highland College UHI with effect from 1st November 2016.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 28th November 2016.

The meeting closed at 17:40