

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
Minutes of Board Meeting held on
Thursday 20 June 2024
At 1.30pm in the Boardroom and via MS Teams

Present:

Jessie McLeman (Chair of meeting)	Elizabeth Hudson (via MS Teams)
Grenville Johnston (via MS Teams)	Ralph Luck (left at 2.30pm)
David Patterson	Clare Matysova
Caroline Webster	James Walls
Stuart Cruickshank	Charlotte Usher - HISA (via MS Teams)
Rebecca Dewis (via MS Teams)	

In Attendance:

Carolyn Thomson	Eleanor Melton (Clerk)
Murray Easton	Alex Hastings (Minutes)
Derek Duncan	

Item		Action	Date
BM.24.04.01	(i) Resignations		
1.1	The Clerk notified the Board that one resignation was received from Amy Wiggins.		
	(ii) Appointments		
1.2	Ralph Luck, Clare Matysova and James Walls were all appointed as Board members. Sarah Marshall was appointed as the Moray Depute President for HISA.		
BM.24.04.02	Apologies for Absence		
2.1	Apologies were received from Jamie Wilson and Dave McCallum.		
BM.24.04.03	Any Additional Declarations of Interest including specific items on this Agenda		
3.1	There were no additional declarations of interest received.		
BM.24.04.04	Draft Minutes of Previous Board Meetings held on:		
	(i) 21 March 2024		
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record: Proposed: Grenville Johnston Seconded: Stuart Cruickshank		
	(ii) 21 May 2024		
4.2	The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record: Proposed: Elizabeth Hudson		

	Seconded: Grenville Johnston		
BM.24.04.05	Matters Arising from Previous Board Meetings held on:		
	(i) 21 March 2024		
5.1	<u>BM.24.02.05</u> – Ongoing		
ACTION	Clerk to add Policy for Achieving Net Zero to the Agenda of September Board Meeting.	Clerk	05-09-2024
5.2	<p><u>BM.24.02.06</u></p> <p><u>6.3.1</u> – Complete - David notified the Board that he would provide an update to this item later in the agenda.</p> <p><u>6.3.2</u> – Ongoing - David was not aware whether Jamie had written to the Executive Office detailing concerns, therefore this will be taken up separately.</p> <p><u>6.4.1</u> - Complete - the action is being progressed.</p> <p><u>6.4.2</u> – Complete - David will provide an update on this in the Principals Report.</p> <p><u>6.5.1</u> – Complete</p> <p><u>6.5.2</u> – Complete</p>		
5.3	<u>BM.24.02.07</u> – Complete		
5.4	<u>BM.24.02.08</u> – Ongoing – On plan for next LTQC meeting.		
5.5	<u>BM.24.02.14</u> - Complete		
BM.24.04.06	Principal's Report		
6.1	<p>David supported the paper submitted to the Board, highlighting the key outcomes reflected in the KPI Dashboard. HE enrolments have recovered in-year and are closer to the College's target than previously expected. FE retention has dipped from last year but is not far from the target. A significant improvement has been made in the year-end adjusted financial position compared to the June 2023 FFR forecast. Student satisfaction has been recorded at the highest level in recent years.</p> <p>Jessie asked what percentage of existing FE students apply for HE studies at the College. David explained that the vast majority are direct applicants, feeding through from FE.</p> <p>Ralph queried whether the funding arrangements for colleges in Scotland were similar to those in England. David explained that annual targets are provided by the SFC in terms of the credits enrolled.</p>		

	<p>The Board agreed to add funding arrangements into the new members' induction session and information pack.</p> <p>The Board noted David's update that full-time student achievement figures were again above the national average for the sixth consecutive year.</p> <p>David provided supporting charts, illustrating the decline in HE applications for 2024/25, in comparison with previous levels. Jessie asked the likelihood that this position can be recovered. David explained that enrolments came to a halt when the financial and curriculum offer situation was highlighted by the press. David is working on alleviating this pressure by including curriculum availability information in his monthly press reports. Jessie queried whether this was more of a fundamental issue with regards to HE enrolments. David stated that the problem started during the Covid period, with more universities offering fully remote study. David emphasised that the decline in overseas students has made the competition for HE enrolments across the country fiercer than in the past.</p> <p>David updated the Board on the national bargaining pay disputes, detailing that Unison have voted to accept the 3-year pay offer, and the backdated pay is due in July. The EIS-FELA union are continuing strike action; however, ASOS is not impacting the College. A College communication to staff advised that this would constitute a breach of contract and pay would be deducted accordingly. It was noted by the Board that there were no outstanding unit entries as of today. Only one member of staff has participated in the strike action; the media continues to report that strike action continues to take place.</p> <p>The Board noted this update from David and look forward to the further information provided later in the agenda.</p>		
ACTION	Clerk to include College funding arrangements in the Board induction sessions and pack.	EM	
BM.24.04.07	Draft Minutes of University Court		
7.1	The Clerk informed the Board that the minutes from this meeting had been requested but have not been distributed as of yet. There is a UHI Court meeting taking place next week, therefore two sets of		

	minutes will be included in the next Board meeting agenda.		
BM.24.04.08	Minutes of Partnership Forum Meeting		
8.1	The minutes were unavailable for this meeting.		
BM.24.04.09	Learning and Teaching		
	(i) SFC Student Performance 2022/23		
9.1	An update was provided within the Principals Report.		
	(ii) Curriculum Offer 2024/25 – In FRP Document (previously circulated)		
9.2	David informed the Board that the Future Focus course has been paused and alternative funding sources will be sought for this. In terms of the HE curriculum offer, the College is offering 15 HNC courses, 3 HND courses and 7 degree programmes. On top of this, there is also potential for the College to act as a host to courses offered within the partnership. Further details of the curriculum offer are in the FRP document.		
	(iii) Student Experience Satisfaction Survey		
9.3	David provided an update for this in the Principal's Report item.		
	(iv) Annual Engagement Visit – Education Scotland - Verbal		
9.4	David notified the Board that the visit was by and large very positive, although he has not as yet received the written feedback.		
BM.24.04.10	Voluntary Severance Scheme – Update – Verbal		
10.1	<p>Carolyn provided an update on the events over recent weeks. Following a meeting with the SFC and RSB on 31 May, a revised FRP was developed which totalled 38 FTEs as the target for the VSS. VSS was then launched on 3 June with the deadline for applications being 24 June. As of today, there have been 32 applications received. Some of these will have significant associated pension fund strain. Some applications look able to be immediately supported, pending the formal agreement process, as they are in the areas the College is looking to reduce. Other staff are willing to reduce hours rather than apply for VSS, and this will be reviewed.</p> <p>Carolyn advised that staff will be on leave as of tomorrow due to it being the end of term. Academic managers will be available for two days next week to review applications. The timeline for the whole process means that staff will be notified whether their application was successful or not on the first</p>		

	<p>week of their return from leave. For the majority of staff, 31 October 2024 would be the leaving date following the completion of their notice period.</p> <p>Clare asked about the process for refusing or accepting applications. Carolyn explained that recommendations will be made by SLT with the help of academic managers, and a Board member will review and decide on all recommendations; the College has the discretion to accept or refuse applications.</p> <p>Carolyn's update was noted by the Board.</p>		
BM.24.04.11	Financial Position - RESERVED		
	(i) 2022-23 Financial Statements		
11.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	(ii) 2023-24 Update		
11.2	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	(iii) 2024-25 Plan		
11.3	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
BM.24.04.12	Audit Committee Annual Report to the Board		
12.1	Due to the External Audit Report from Deloitte remaining outstanding, this item will be revisited once the report is finalised.		
BM.24.04.13	Estates Update		
13.1	<p>Derek commenced the Estates Update seeking Board approval for refurbishment of the lift in Culbin Wing due to the lift servicing agent being unable to secure spare parts for the current lift. Derek explained that funding is available to cover this due to an underspend in funds for the 2022/23 session. The Board unanimously agreed for the remaining allocation to be applied to the lift refurbishment.</p> <p>The SFC has confirmed that the College can go ahead with its planned spend on ICT equipment. An order for this has been placed and delivery is expected in July.</p> <p>There were a number of questions raised in the discussion of the rest of the paper on the capital maintenance backlog programme. For example, the drivers for and benefits of the proposed items of expenditure were unclear, e.g. disabled access, compliance, and so on.</p>		

	<p>Jessie asked if campus security would be covered by the measures set out in the plan, given the rise in incidents. Derek confirmed that the plans in place to improve campus security will be covered in the overall maintenance spend.</p> <p>It was agreed that further work on the backlog capital maintenance plan will be needed, to be discussed in the next F&GP Committee meeting. Derek will produce a high-level plan with budgetary estimates as part of the wider context and policy for F&GP.</p>		
ACTION	Derek to produce maintenance plan along with budgetary estimates, for discussion at next F&GP Committee	DD	Next F&GP meeting
BM.24.04.14	Health and Safety Update		
14.1	<p>Derek informed the Board of the current situation regarding the vacant Health and Safety Officer role. Due to the retirement of the previous postholder, existing staff have had to cover during semester 2. Despite two rounds of advertising, it has not been possible to appoint a replacement and therefore, it has been decided to procure the role of the competent person from a 3rd party supplier. Jessie asked if the College could approach UHI for support in this role. Derek stated that the Inverness campus would be unable to offer support due to their own workload commitments.</p> <p>Derek highlighted a marked increase in violence at work; groups of students have been involved, along with some non-students. This is a trend that schools are also reporting. Jessie asked if there was anything the Board could do to support the security plans and measures within the College. It was agreed that the F&GP Committee will be invited to discuss plans, for review by the Board.</p> <p>The Board noted that a full year H&S review will be published after the end of the session and a formal report will be provided at the September Board meeting.</p>		
ACTION	Derek to present proposals to the next meeting of the F&GP in view of the increase in violence at work.	DD	Next F&GP meeting
BM.24.04.15	Policies Due for Review - Verbal		
15.1	Derek highlighted that the approval of policies is currently behind schedule, and therefore SLT will		

	<p>need to review a revised plan for taking these to the Board/ relevant Committees for approval.</p> <p>Carolyn added that there are around 30 HR policies awaiting approval. The Board noted the difficulties in following the HR review schedule, due to the disputes with Trade Union representatives and refusal to attend meetings. The Board noted that there remains a risk that these policies will not be finalised. The backlog work from this year will be carried forward to be reviewed by the HRPRG next year.</p>		
BM.24.04.16	Minutes from Previous Committee Meetings		
	(i) Draft Minutes of Audit Committee held on 16 May 2024		
16.1	Jessie informed the Board that there were no further matters to raise to members from this meeting.		
	(ii) Draft Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 6 June 2024		
16.2	Caroline informed the Board that there were no matters to raise to members from this meeting.		
BM.24.04.17	Your Student Association Update		
	(i) Election Report 2024		
17.1	The report was noted by the Board. It is anticipated that questions can be addressed at the Board Development Day.		
	(ii) Board of Management Report		
17.2	Charlotte notified the Board that Aimee Cuthbert will attend the Board Development Day to support this report and consider how the Board can work positively with the student association.		
BM.24.04.18	Emerging Issues		
	(i) Update on the OBC for the proposed new UHI Operating Model - Verbal		
18.1	<p>David informed the Board that discussions are ongoing regarding how the partnership will operate in the future given the current financial climate; there are several new initiatives being discussed to review the structure. David highlighted that work had been halted on the UHI 2024 operating model due to the targets becoming unachievable.</p> <p>The Outline Business Case (OBC) had been due to be discussed by principals this week; however, UHI Court wished to input its amendments to the document first. There is now an invitation for Board</p>		

	<p>members to attend a briefing session on the OBC next Friday.</p> <p>The Board noted that the full business case for the new operating model is expected to be completed by Summer 2025.</p>		
	(ii) Draft Board and Committee Schedule 2024-25		
18.2	<p>The Clerk informed the Board that the schedule remains under review whilst attempts are being made to accommodate members' availability. One Board member has queried whether it would be possible to change certain meetings scheduled for Thursdays/certain Thursdays. A draft schedule will be distributed to members and in the event of any issues, the Clerk has invited members to raise these with her.</p> <p>In terms of the Committees, convener roles will be finalised before the end of July. The Clerk confirmed that participation in Committees will be discussed with the newly appointed Board members.</p> <p>David added that the College has received an application to join the Board, and that is awaiting approval from UHI Court.</p> <p>As discussed in previous meetings, the Board is seeking a willing member to volunteer for the position of Vice-Chair. Grenville confirmed his willingness to take on the role. Jessie proposed Grenville as the new Vice-Chair, and this was seconded by Caroline. The Board unanimously agreed to appoint Grenville as the Vice-Chair.</p>		
	(iii) Graduation Date – 4 October 2023		
18.3	<p>The Clerk asked for Board members' availability for the confirmed graduation date. Grenville stated that he is available and further availability from other members will be confirmed shortly.</p>		
	(iv) Development Day		
18.4	<p>The Board members agreed to notify the Clerk of their availability over the summer period, to allow her to confirm a date for the Development Day, which will take place in August.</p> <p>It was also agreed that the Clerk would check that the Development Day is scheduled prior to the UHI Court meeting date.</p>		
ACTION	Board members to confirm summer availability to the Clerk, as well as any concerns re proposed Board	ALL	ASAP

	and Committee meeting dates set out in the draft schedule.		
ACTION	Clerk to ensure Development Day date precedes the UHI Court meeting date.	EM	
BM.24.04.19	Date of Next Meeting – TBC		
RESERVED ITEMS			
BM.24.04.20	Draft Reserved Minutes of Previous Board Meetings held on:		
	(i) 21 March 2024		
20.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	(ii) 21 May 2024		
20.2	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	(iii) 31 May 2024		
20.3	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
BM.24.04.21	Reserved Matters Arising of Board Meeting held on:		
	(i) 21 March 2024		
21.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	(ii) 21 May 2024		
21.2	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	(iii) 31 May 2024		
21.3	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
BM.24.04.22	Draft Reserved Minutes from previous Committee Meetings:		
	(i) Draft Minutes of Audit Committee held on 16 May 2024		
22.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	(ii) Draft Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 6 June 2024		
22.2	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
BM.24.04.23	Moray Growth Deal Update - Verbal		
23.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	<i>Meeting closed at 4.30pm</i>		