UHI | MORAY MOIREIBH

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes of Meeting held on
Thursday 14 November 2024
At 1:30pm in the Boardroom

Present:

Alex Paterson (Convener)	Katy O'Connor
David Patterson	Stuart Cruickshank
Clare Matysova (Joined at 2.20pm)	

In Attendance:

Carolyn Thomson
Derek Duncan (Joined at 3pm)
Alex Hastings (Minutes)

Item		Action	Date
SG.24.03.01	**(i) Resignations**		
1.1	It was noted that a number of changes had been made since the last meeting, with David and Stuart being the only members remaining.		
	(ii) Appointments		
1.2	Grenville Johnston, Clare Matysova and Katy O'Connor were all appointed as Committee members.		
SG.24.03.02	**Apologies for Absence**		
2.1	Apologies were received from Grenville Johnston.		
SG.24.03.03	**Any Additional Declarations of Interest including specific items on this Agenda**		
3.1	There were no additional declarations of interest received.		
SG.24.03.04	**Draft Minutes of Staff Governance Committee meeting held on 25 May 2023**		
4.1	Carolyn drew attention to the Cultures and Values Update item SG.23.02.07, where it states, 'public sector bodies are further on than us.' Carolyn requested that this be changed to 'public sector bodies are ahead.' Following the agreed amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate record: Proposed: Stuart Cruickshank Seconded: David Patterson		
SG.24.03.05	**Matters Arising of Staff Governance Committee meeting held on 25 May 2023**		
5.1	Carolyn notified the Committee that all of the actions agreed in the last meeting were completed.		

SG.24.03.06	Emerging Issues		
	(i) Terms of Reference		
6.1	The Terms of Reference were not included in the papers for today's meeting. It was agreed that this would be circulated to Committee members, with any comments welcomed.		
ACTION	Clerk to circulate Committee Terms of Reference to all members.	**AH**	
SG.24.03.07	**HR Director's Report**		
7.1	The minutes of consultation and negotiation meetings (iii) to (x) were all taken as read. The importance of reviewing developments over the past year in terms of discussions regarding the FRP in JCC and JNC meetings, as well as the relations with Trade Unions was noted. Carolyn supported the paper, firstly, by providing an update on the level of staff FTEs to date, adding that it is possible to advise staff that no compulsory redundancies are necessary at this point. Carolyn reported on the lecturing and support staff pay deals, attached in the paper, adding that concerns are expected to be raised regarding the support staff's 4th year difference. Carolyn reminded members of the ongoing dispute situation with the Trade Unions, relating to information being shared with staff. We are currently in stage 2 of the Internal Disputes process and are currently seeking confirmation from both unions of the status of these disputes. Carolyn advised that there has been no response yet, and it was agreed that Carolyn will reapproach Unions for a response and take steps to close off disputes depending on what the response is. Carolyn advised members that notification was received from the UNISON region that the branch is currently under supervision and any approaches made are directed to the region. The branch has indicated that they are on strike against the region. With regards to the organisational KPIs, Alex raised a point which had been discussed in the recent Board meeting. Alex queried the low level of staff sickness. Carolyn advised that working from home has allowed for staff to continue working whilst too sick to work in person. This may be in part due to staff not wanting to let their colleagues down, Carolyn added that there have been examples of this in her own team. Carolyn pointed out that the sickness rate looks low compared to national averages, but the College has small teams, and the impact of sicknesses is high as a result. Alex asked how the figures were measured. Carolyn confirmed that they are measured on a 'FTE lost over FTE possible' basis.		

	Carolyn raised the UHI Moray Employer Discretions Policy for the Committee's approval. This policy was not included in the papers; therefore, it will be circulated to all members for review and following that, published to the NESPF. Carolyn reported that the transfer to a new software provider for a HR and Payroll System has been challenging. This transfer was required due to the old company being bought over. There have been glitches with the new system, one of which involved an overpayment to staff, this was subsequently retrieved back the following month. Carolyn highlighted that these challenges have coincided with significant workload periods with backdated pay awards, for example. Carolyn notified members that the issues with the new service have been raised to the CEO and Board of the company, and consultants are working with HR to develop the system. Alex asked what the time scale of completion is for the implementation of this project. Carolyn advised that the consultants were hoping to finish at the end of the year but that there would still be set up, roll out and training required. Carolyn added that ensuring staff will engage with the new system's practices will be a big task. Stuart asked if Carolyn knew what service the other partners opted for. Carolyn advised that the College could not risk a delay so went with what was proposed, rather than looking elsewhere. She confirmed that the shared HR system project with other partners had been brought to an end. Clare suggested that the differentiation between the Gender Pay Gap and Equal Pay be highlighted in the next report. With regards to the Annual Employment Data Report, Clare stated that it may be worth looking into the ethnicity figures, and potential bias from the white Scottish/British majority. Potential unconscious bias was discussed and Carolyn confirmed that a lot of training has been done on this over the past few years and HR normally attend interviews to ensure the correct process is being adhered to. The Committee requested that Carolyn made sure this issue was covered in the roll out of the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure.		
ACTION	Carolyn to approach Unions for a response and take steps to close off disputes depending on what the response is.	**CT**	
ACTION	Carolyn to circulate Employee Discretions Policy to all members to review and suggest any amendments.	**CT**	
ACTION	Differentiation between the Gender Pay Gap and Equal Pay be highlighted in the next report.	**CT**	

SG.24.03.08	**Cultures and Values Update**		
8.1	Carolyn supported the paper, highlighting that practices within the College are well demonstrated with regards to the Fair Work Agenda. Following a discussion regarding the need for a further staff survey, the last having taken place in 2019, Carolyn suggested to the Committee that a staff survey should take place in 2025, following the new structures across the site in curriculum and staffing being embedded. Carolyn added that although the College feels very different at the moment, CMT meetings have provided a lot of positivity, and a belief that although it will be difficult, the College can get to a good place. Clare drew attention to feedback routes, asking if it is known how confident staff are to use them. Clare raised exit interviews, as an example. Carolyn explained the previous problems occurring with staff interviews, such as staff not completing the forms at all, and the college not being able to guarantee anonymity. Carolyn advised that the new HR system will allow for exit forms, once embedded. The Committee noted this update.		
ACTION	Staff survey to take place in 2025.	**CT**	
SG.24.03.09	**Staff Development Activities**		
9.1	Carolyn supported the paper, and informed the Committee that a Staff Development Day is planned for 6 January 2025, along with a relaunch of Blue Sky Days incorporating ideation. Alex drew attention to the mandatory compliance training, asking to what extent this is monitored. Carolyn explained that there are multiple modules on different training platforms. Carolyn added that the iHASCO platform is easy to use, report on and to send reminders to staff. Carolyn advised that the Brightspace and LearnUpon databases are difficult to report on, and most staff have done this training, and it has become repetitive. Carolyn advised that more credits have been bought from iHASCO, and compliance training will be prioritised in January 2025. Carolyn added that 100% compliance is sought and there will be much better control of this. Alex suggested that escalation could be used to ensure compliance, such as reminders being sent out to staff and if incompletion continues. Katy highlighted that staff workload needs to be considered. Alex drew attention to the mandatory data protection sessions, adding that if this is critical, there should be a way of		

	tracking compliance with this. Stuart raised a number of issues with the mandatory in person sessions and suggested making data protection a mandatory course online. The Committee agreed with this proposal. Carolyn's update was noted by the Committee.		
ACTION	A means of tracking undertaking of mandatory training to be identified.	**CT**	
SG.24.03.10	**HR Policies Due for Review**		
	(i) Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure		
10.1	Carolyn presented the policy, requesting approval from the Committee. With regards to the interview process, there will no longer be an HR presence in every interview. Stuart highlighted that additional staff training on after care regarding the interview process may be required. Stuart added that there may also be measures that HR work on quicker than line managers, therefore support with this may be required. The Committee were happy to approve this subject to equalities/unconscious bias being referenced, as agreed in discussions around the Annual Employment Data Report.		
ACTION	Carolyn to ensure that unconscious bias is covered in the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure.	**CT**	
SG.24.03.11	**Health and Safety Update**		
	(i) Minutes of Health and Safety Meeting held on 22 August 2024		
11.1	Derek supported the paper, giving an outline on health and safety incidents over the past year. It was highlighted that there were 12 incidents of violence at work last year. So far, no incidents have been recorded this year. Derek stated that near miss reporting is very low, which is causing difficulties in setting benchmarks for improvements. There were 19 near misses recorded, which does not reflect what is happening around campus. Derek drew attention to the Health and Safety Officer retiring. There were two failed attempts at advertising a replacement, Derek stated that this may be due to the pay offered, in comparison to other similar roles across the region. A procurement exercise took place for a health and safety service to provide the role of a competent person to undertake H&S duties. The health and safety service will provide a range of key services, one of which may improve near miss reporting. Alex asked if the lower number of recorded hand injuries and violence at work incidents were due to measures put in place		

	by staff at the College. Derek stated that further emphasis is being placed on safety within the technology centre and the hospitality department. With regards to the RIDDOR Report, a member of staff in the woodwork department took images of how the incident occurred and ran through this with students to fine-tune correct practice. Stuart proposed working with HISA to promote near miss reporting which may improve safety culture across the College. Stuart added that students are not able to raise near misses and have to raise issues to staff. Derek highlighted that a mobile app is being made available for near miss reporting which may improve the recording of incidents. Derek's update was noted by the Committee.		
SG.24.03.12	**Target Operating Model Update - Verbal**		
12.1	David informed the Committee that there has been another meeting regarding the Target Operating Model since the last Board meeting on 31 October. Work is being carried out on the OBC to meet the end of November deadline, with three of the original options discounted. Plans for a fully integrated partnership is being proposed. David advised that the draft OBC has been seen but will not be seen again until after it's been presented at UHI Court. David highlighted a range of responses from other partners, adding that there has been no settlement on what a fully integrated university looks like. A consultation period is expected in the new year following UHI Court's consideration of the OBC. This will have to outline the risks and challenges of the proposal. Katy asked who developed the OBC. David explained that UHI Court, executive and non-executive boards, as well as the UHI Transformation team have all worked collaboratively on this. Katy then asked if the SFC are involved in this process. David stated that they are on the non-executive board, Stuart asked how decision-making will work across the partnership. Alex advised that this will be set out once a preferred option is agreed, bearing in mind legal responsibilities. Alex informed the Committee that the OBC will be progressed to a FBC within the first 6 months of 2025. Carolyn asked when staff will get to see the OBC. David responded that this will presumably happen at some point in the new year. Katy asked what the consensus was within the College on what is preferred. Stuart and Alex advised that when the Board considered the draft OBC some weeks ago, it wasn't possible to identify a preferred option at that time due to the lack of information, particularly on the financial case. Clare asked Alex if there had been a response from UHI Court regarding the letter the Board wrote. Alex advised that this		

	has not happened yet, but he has asked for this. Alex advised that other Boards have written to UHI Chair providing their comments on the draft OBC. Stuart drew attention to what this may look like for Moray, with further redundancies possible should an integration take place and services are shared, meaning no area would be safe from job losses. Stuart added that the increase in reputational damage resulting from this would be unimaginable, with the press already against the College's reductions. The Committee noted this update.		
SG.24.03.13	**Emerging Issues**		
13.1	David and Alex informed the Committee that the new Chair of the Board is due to start on 1 December 2024.		
SG.24.03.14	**Date of Next Meeting – 27 February 2025**		
	Meeting closed at 15.40pm		