

**MINUTES OF THE COURT MEETING (UC)  
UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS  
HELD ON THURSDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2011  
AT THE NEW DRUMOSSIE HOTEL, INVERNESS  
AT 0800 HRS**

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<b>PRESENT:</b>	Jack Watson (Chair) Wilma Campbell James Fraser Janet Hackel Eileen Mackay John Eccles Professor Donald MacRae Dr Bruce Nelson Thomas Prag Norman Sharp Dr.Fiona Skinner Rt Hon Lord William Prosser Joe Moore Nathan Shields Hugh Morison David Green Andy Rogers Murray McCheyne Allan Wishart	Member (Independent) Member (Academic Partner) Member (Ex officio) Member (Non-teaching Staff) Member (Independent) Member (Academic Partner) Member (Independent-HIE) Member (Sponsor University) Member (UHI Foundation) Member (Independent) Member (Teaching Staff) Member (Independent) Member (UHI Foundation) Member (Ex officio) Member (Independent) Executive Board (Vice Chair) Member (Independent-HIE) Member (Academic Partner) Member (Academic Partner)
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<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Dr Jeff Howarth Martin Wright Michael Rayner	Fiona Larg Roger Sendall (minutes)
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<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Matthew MacIver Iris Hawkins Professor Norman Gillies Dr Crichton Lang Garry Sutherland Penny Brodie Anne Clark Dr Alistair Mair Norman Sharp	Gary Coutts (Rector) Professor Kenneth Miller Michael Gibson Dr Jana Hutt Jean Urquhart Professor Anton Edwards Ken Kennedy Aideen O'Malley
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ITEM	ACTION
1 <b>INTRODUCTION</b>  1.1 <b>Welcome</b>  It was noted that a quorum was present.	

## 1.2 **Declarations of Interest:**

Dr Nelson declared an interest in item 3 relating to RUK fees. It was noted that as an employee of Edinburgh University he would not participate in discussion relating to this item.

Ms Mackay declared an interest in item 4 relating to the Review of HE Governance. It was noted that she was a member of the governing body of another HE institution.

## 1.3 **Notification of other business:** None.

## 2 **MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

### 2.1 **Approval of Minutes.**

Court agreed to defer consideration of the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011 (UC11-033) until the scheduled quarterly meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

### 2.2 **Matters Arising/Action Points (UC11-034):** Deferred until 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

## 3 **REST OF UK FEES**

Court considered the paper UC11-035 relating to setting fees for RUK students. It was noted that the Scottish Government had requested universities to provide indicative fees for RUK students for 2012/2013 not later than the end of September 2011.

It was noted that Court had previously delegated the authority to set fees to the Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC) and that following a meeting of FGPC on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2011 that a final decision on RUK fee levels for 2012/2013 would be made by the Chair of FGPC and the Vice Chancellor and Principal of UHI following consultation with Court, the Academic Partner Chairs Committee (APCC) and the Executive Board.

In addition it was noted that the Chair of FGPC would welcome further comments on the UHI fee offer by email and the UHISA representative was particularly encouraged to do this.

It was noted that the issue of setting RUK fees for the 2013/2014 student intake would be considered by Court.

During the course of discussion the following points were highlighted.

- RUK fees set by Scottish universities are attracting considerable public and media interest at the present time.
- Students participating in a 4 year honours degree course should be eligible to one free year of study. This should be offered in the final year to encourage retention. For the avoidance of doubt students would not qualify for a free year of study if they had not attended and paid for the preceding three years.
- One AP offering specialist courses favoured a fee of around £8000 per annum to reflect market value of a particular course and a high delivery cost whereas another AP favoured a lower fee of around £6000 per annum to promote wider access.
- A majority of AP's favoured a single fee structure as oppose to separating fees for

science or arts based courses. This would ensure a clear and simple message for prospective students. A fee level of £7,000 or £7500 per annum was considered appropriate by the Executive Board.

- Bursary payments should be considered as a mechanism for adjusting the cost of learning to students where appropriate, recognising a need to set course fees at an appropriate level to reflect the cost of delivery and to promote fair access. Criteria for bursaries should be based on recognised external qualification criteria and not developed in house.
- Further discussion is required as regards agreeing a suitable mechanism for distributing fees collected to partners.
- Improved data is needed from academic partners relating to the costs associated with hosting and teaching individual courses.

#### 4 **REVIEW OF HE GOVERNANCE**

Court considered the paper UC11-036 relating to how UHI should respond to the Scottish Government's Review of Higher Education Governance. It was noted that a response was required by 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011.

The Secretary undertook to circulate a draft response to members of Court for consideration and also to arrange an opportunity for members to participate in further discussion on the UHI submission via video conference before the deadline.

#### 5 **DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

THURSDAY 6th OCTOBER 2011  
Tuesday 13th December 2011  
Wednesday and Thursday 18th and 19th January 2012 An Comann  
Tuesday 27th March 2012  
Tuesday 19th June 2012

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.35 Am.