

**DRAFT MINUTE OF THE COURT MEETING (UC)  
UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS  
HELD ON TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2013  
AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE, INVERNESS  
AT 11:00 HRS**

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- PRESENT:** Professor Matthew MacIver (Chair)  
James Fraser (UHI Principal and Vice-chancellor)  
Jack Watson  
Hugh Morison (VC)  
Eileen Mackay (VC)  
Professor Donald MacRae (VC)  
Thomas Prag  
Dr Alistair Mair (VC)  
Dr Bruce Nelson (VC)  
Niall Smith  
Professor Kenny Miller  
Janet Hackel  
Dr Fiona Skinner  
Joe Moore
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Fiona Larg (Chief operating Officer & Secretary)  
Garry Coutts (UHI Rector)  
Dr Michael Foxley  
Murray McCheyne  
Michael Gibson  
Dr Michael Foxley  
Janice Annal  
Aideen O'Malley  
Dr Jeff Howarth  
Dr Gordon Jenkins (Deputy Chair, Executive Board)  
Martin Wright  
Roger Sendall (minutes)
- APOLOGIES:** Professor Norman Sharp  
Katrina Paton (UHISA President)  
Rt Hon. Lord William Prosser  
Professor Anton Edwards  
Dr Brian Chaplain  
Professor Bill McKelvey  
Iain Scott  
Drew Ratter  
Lorna MacDonald  
Dr Crichton Lang  
Andrew Campbell  
Penny Brodie  
Garry Sutherland  
Andy Rogers  
Dr Jana Hutt

ITEM	ACTION
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>1.1 Welcome and Quorum.</b>	
It was noted that a quorum was present.	
<b>1.2 Declarations of Interest:</b> None.	
<b>1.3 Notification of any other Business.</b> None	
<b>2 MINUTES OF MEETINGS</b>	
<b>2.1 Approval of Minutes.</b>	
The Court resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2012 (UC12-085).	
The Chair of the FE Regional Board requested an amendment to the draft minutes of the special Court meeting held on 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2013 (UC13-001). It was agreed that the minutes would be approved by Chairs action following amendment.	
<b>2.2 Matters Arising.</b>	
The Court noted the Matters Arising paper UC13-002.	
<b>3 CHAIRMAN/PRINCIPAL'S COMMENTS</b>	
<b>3.1 Report from the Chairman.</b>	
The Court noted paper UC13-003.	
<b>3.2 UHI Prospects.</b>	
The Court received a presentation from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor. A copy of the presentation slides are appended to and form a part of this minute.	
<b>3.3 News and Events Round-Up</b>	
The Court noted paper UC13-004.	
<b>4 COMMITTEES &amp; MEMBERSHIP</b>	
<b>4.1 Structure Charts.</b>	
The Court considered paper UC13-005 comprising three diagrams that were intended to provide a pictorial representation of UHI governance and senior management structures agreed by Court on 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2012.	
Some concerns were expressed relating to the presentation of the triumvirate and the FE Regional Board within the diagrams. It was agreed to amend the diagrams to better reflect the role of the triumvirate, the status of the FE Regional Board as a highly autonomous	

committee of Court and to illustrate channels of communication between APs involved in FE, Research and Specialist activities. It was also agreed to undertake a modelling exercise to illustrate practically how business and information would flow through the organisation and where decisions would be made.

## **4.2 Honorary Fellowships and Degrees Committee**

The Court approved paper UC13-006 prepared by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor setting out a policy for determining honorary awards and for distinguishing them from the recognition of benefactors of the university.

## **5 GOVERNANCE**

### **5.1 Options for Change Update**

The following papers were noted:

- UC13-007 (a) an update on implementation of the Governance Working Party recommendations.
- UC13-007 (b) an update on progress with Transformation Implementation Group work streams.
- UC13-007 (c) an update on the process to elect staff representatives to serve as members of the University Court and FE Regional Board.

The following key points were highlighted:

- The Director of Learning and Information Services would be seconded for a period of six months commencing 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013 to lead progression of the shared services project. A cross partnership event was planned for 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April to facilitate progress.
- Substantial scrutiny of the rationale influencing individual AP decisions whether to opt in or out of shared services was recommended as beneficial to improving efficiency and developing a quality service.
- The interim FE Regional Board had begun meeting jointly with AP Principals and this was leading to more effective working and improvements in trust between APs. FE funding issues had dominated the agenda to date.
- UHI had submitted a formal bid for transition funding to SFC for £1.1M.
- Interviews for the new Vice/Associate Principal (FE) would be held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2013.
- 29 applications had been received for the post of Vice/Associate Principal (R&S). Shortlisting would take place in due course.
- It was recognised that the relationship between UHI and APs would change fundamentally following enactment of the Post 16 Education Bill and that as a result it would be necessary to re-examine the terms of individual academic partnership agreements.

## 5.2 Draft SFC HE Outcome Agreement 2013/14

The Court considered the paper UC13-008 containing the first draft of the Higher Education Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for 2013/14.

It was noted that Court was broadly supportive of the draft document and pleased with the direction of travel. It was agreed to delegate authority to approve the final agreement to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Secretary

## 5.3 Report from UHI Foundation

It was noted that the Foundation had not met since the last Court meeting. The next Foundation business meeting was scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

## 5.4 Report from UHISA

Court noted the written report provided by the President of UHISA (UC13-009).

## 5.5 High Level Risk Register (HLRR)

The Chair of the Risk Review Group (RRG) led Court through the updated HLRR (UC12-010) as amended following a meeting of RRG on 11th February 2013. The following points were highlighted:

- Scoring of HLRR Risk 4 relating to financial failure remained extreme (5\*5=25) despite some short term improvements to AP finances.
- RRG had received a useful and informative presentation from the Dean of Health Engineering and Science who had identified succession planning as a key risk area for UHI. The existing structure whereby lecturing staff were employed by individual APs rather than by UHI created a number of challenges for UHI in this area and left the partnership vulnerable to sudden and unforeseen staff changes. (HLRR 8)
- HLRR 13 had been left on the HLRR in error. This risk should be removed from HLRR. UHI had met IIR student number targets and the funding had been secured.
- The HLRR contained little information about risks associated with the student experience. It was noted that RRG had invited the Dean of Students to attend the next meeting of RRG to discuss issues associated with student experience.
- All APs had now shared their own risk registers with RRG and the Finance Directors Practitioners Group was working to develop a consistent approach to monitoring and scoring information about key risks.
- HLRR 16 articulated concerns about a lack of resource to support new responsibilities for FE reflecting concerns that these would need to be paid for by an FE top slice. A bid for transition funding had been made to SFC as reported at section 5.1 above.

## 5.6 UHI Annual Health and Safety Reports

The Court approved the following reports:

- The UHI Annual Health and Safety Report UC13-011(a) prepared by the UHI Health and Safety Advisor.
- The Executive Office Annual Health and Safety Report UC13-011(b) prepared by the UHI Facilities Manager.

## **5.7 Equality & Diversity EO Framework**

The Court noted the paper UC13-012 prepared by the Head of Human Resources providing an update on progress with agreed equality outcomes.

## **6 FINANCE & PLANNING**

### **6.1 2012/13 Quarter 2 Budget Re-forecast**

The Court approved paper UC13-013 prepared by the Director of Finance providing a budget reforecast for quarter 2 based on the management accounts of UHI for the six month period ended 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013.

### **6.2 Pensions Strategy Update**

The Court noted paper UC13-014 prepared by the Director of Finance providing an update on progress with developing a formal pension strategy for UHI EO employees due to the negative impact that the pension liability is having on UHI's net asset position on the balance sheet.

### **6.3 UKBA Internal Audit Findings**

The Court noted paper UC13-015 prepared by the Director of Marketing, Communications and Planning providing a summary of the main findings of an internal audit report into the operation of the university's UKBA Tier 4 licence.

## **7 ACADEMIC & RESEARCH**

### **7.1 Red Button Annual Report**

The Court noted paper UC13-016 prepared by the Dean of Students providing a summary of issues reported by students across the partnership via the university's informal feedback and problem resolution mechanism "red button".

### **7.2 Rates for 2011/12 non-continuation**

The Court noted paper UC13-017 prepared by the Deputy Principal providing a report on university non-continuation rates and data management. It was noted that the report remained strictly confidential until 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013 after which date the data would be officially published by HESA. Court was pleased to note a substantial improvement in performance.

### **7.3 Research Strategy**

The Court approved the high level Research Strategy document (UC13-018) provided by the Vice Principal Research & Enterprise.

## **7.4 rDAP Update**

The Court noted paper UC13-019 prepared by the Deputy Principal setting out proposals for a revised approach to achieving rDAP.

## **8 REPORTS & CIRCULARS**

### **8.1 Committee meetings**

The Court noted the following minutes of Committee meetings.

- Finance and General Purposes Committee – 4th December 2012, 22nd January and 5th March 2013 (draft)
- Academic Council – 13th December 2012
- Executive Board – 13th December 2012, 26th February 2013 (draft)
- An Comann Proceedings – 16th and 17th January 2013
- Audit Committee – 14th November 2012, 20th February 2013 (draft)
- FE Regional Board – 19th February 2013 (draft)
- UHI Foundation – 29th January 2013 (draft)
- Transformation Implementation Group - 29th January 2013

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- The Chair of SAMS thanked members of Court and the staff of the University for their support and for kind messages of sympathy following the recent sudden death of two staff members in separate incidents.

## **10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:**

18<sup>th</sup> June 2013

The meeting closed at 13:45