

**MINUTES of the MEETING of the CHAIRS COMMITTEE held in the Board Room,
1 Inverness Campus on Thursday 17 August 2017**

PRESENT: Hazel Allen, Sarah Burton, Neil Stewart, Steve Walsh,
John Wilson
CHAIR: Neil Stewart
APOLOGIES: Brian Henderson
OBSERVER: Lindsey Mitchell
ATTENDING: Acting Principal
Secretary to the Board of Management

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 13th June 2017 was **ACCEPTED** as a correct record, was **APPROVED** and signed by the Chair

2. GOVERNANCE – OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Following the last meeting in June, an action list had been developed which showed the outstanding governance actions and the timelines for taking each forward.

The Board Secretary highlighted the progress which had been made and also the actions which were still outstanding.

It was **AGREED** that the Board Secretary would resend the link to the Governance Hub and the remuneration module.

The Committee considered the requirement for the Chair to evaluate each Board member and agreed that this was a very onerous task. The Committee **AGREED** that in future, the Chair of the Board would evaluate the Committee Chairs and that the Chairs would, in turn, evaluate board members on their committee. Where board members were on more than one committee, the “primary” committee would be identified and the chair of that committee would carry out the evaluation.

3. GOOD GOVERNANCE

A covering report by the Board Secretary referred to a model reporting format for Audit Committee annual reports to the Board of Management which had been suggested by UHI and to two CIPHA best practice guides on Audit and Finance committee self-evaluation.

The Committee **AGREED** that

1. the model reporting format for the Audit Committee annual report be adopted and that it be submitted to the Audit Committee for noting and
2. the two CIPHA best practice guides should be adopted for Audit and Finance Committee evaluations, that they be circulated to both

Committees for noting, and that the first evaluations would take place at the end of this academic year.

4. BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMITTEES – PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENT SUBMISSIONS

A covering report by the Board Secretary referred to a schedule of document submissions which had been drawn up for each of the committees. The schedule identified standing items for each committee as well as reports which were required to be considered at a particular time each year.

The Committee welcomed the schedule of document submissions, noted that the timings of some reports might be adjusted to better meet the needs of the committees and also that some adjustments would be made after the KPIs had been agreed.

It was **AGREED** that the Board Secretary would forward the schedule to the Acting Principal for circulation to the SMT.

5. CHAIRS COMMITTEE – DISCUSSION ON ROLE

The Chair led a discussion on the role of the Chairs Committee and suggested that it could provide a forum for the better exchange of information between Chairs. Each Chairs Committee could have a standing item to allow each Chair to raise any particular item of business. The Chairs would have a better understanding of the discussions at each committee and this in turn could enhance the business of the Board by presenting a joined up approach and which would allow more discussion on strategic issues, rather than the Board simply approving recommendations from committees.

The Committee **AGREED** that this was a positive proposal and that the Board Secretary should contact each Chair for items of business to be considered at the next Chairs Committee on 14th September.

The Chair asked whether it would be beneficial for each committee to prepare an annual report outlining the business conducted throughout the year.

The Committee **AGREED** that this was not required as it would not add any value.

6. AOCB

a. NATIONAL BARGAINING

The Acting Principal referred to

- a. a paper which had been prepared by the Director of Organisational Development on national bargaining,
- b. to a circular (03/17) which had been issued on 16th August by the National Joint Negotiating Committee setting out interim arrangements for the salary placement for new un-promoted lecturers
- c. and also to a meeting with Colleges Scotland and representatives from UHI on 16th August which had been attended by the Director of Organisational Development and the Director of Finance to discuss the financial impact on UHI colleges.

The report by the Director of Organisational Development highlighted the position with regard to Lecturers, Promoted Lecturers (Programme Development Managers) and to support staff. The report also highlighted the potential risks in job evaluation and harmonisation.

The acting Principal understood that the meeting in Stirling on funding for UHI Colleges had had a positive outcome.

The Committee **NOTED** the position.

b. HIGHER MEDIA STUDIES INVESTIGATION

The Chair referred to the unfortunate situation which had arisen with the Media Studies Higher and assured the Acting Principal and the SMT that they had the full support of the Board. The investigation which was being undertaken would allow the College to learn lessons and act on these appropriately.

The Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee provided an update on the investigation which had started 8 days ago. A remit for the investigation, which was being led by the Quality Manager, had been agreed. To date 5 interviews had been held, with a further 7 outstanding. Documents would be reviewed from 15/16 and assurance would be sought that the college had delivered against the course specification.

The investigation was complex as the SQA were less than forthcoming with data. The Acting Principal advised that the Association of Media Educators in Scotland (AMES Charity) had issued a questionnaire to schools and colleges asking a number of simple questions. There was not yet a sense of the main issues which had led to the course failure.

Talks had been held with the Head of Qualifications at SQA on why and how the College had missed the standards required as the internal verification had indicated good practice with a positive outcome expected. As much detail as possible was being requested from the SQA.

The Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee also made reference to the investigation into Higher History to see if there were any systemic issues across both courses.

She advised that a further update meeting had been arranged for the week beginning 28 August.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 14th September 2017 at 8.30 a.m.

Signed by the Chair: _____



Date: _____

