STRATEGIC PLAN
2017-2020
START TOMORROW TODAY

INVERNESS.UHI.AC.UK
Inverness College UHI will have a transformational impact on the development and prospects of the Highlands and Islands region through the provision of excellence in education, training and research, encouraging individual attainment and driving economic and community development.

We will inspire each other, and our community, providing a safe and supportive environment within which we nurture ambition at every opportunity.

We will enrich our Highland community and have national and international reach, putting Inverness College UHI and the University of the Highlands and Islands on the world map and encouraging inward migration.

We will be recognised as a centre of excellence, working with partners to deliver a coherent education system founded upon:

- Inclusive practice that encourages participation and closes the attainment gap;
- Courses of excellent quality that respond to industry demand;
- Seamless pathways through all levels of education;
- Research that informs teaching and drives regional innovation.

We will achieve this by creating a dynamic and progressive environment which promotes effective teamwork, dispersed leadership and creativity.
VALUES

Our values define who we are, our expectations of ourselves and of each other. They describe how we interact with one another and how we interact with our students and partners.

The values that underpin the culture of Inverness College UHI are:

• Respect
• Integrity
• Accountability
• Passion

These values underpin our behaviours at work and the commitments we make to ourselves and one another.

OUR COMMITMENTS

We will operate in an environment of mutual respect, behaving professionally at all times;

We will act with integrity, being honest and transparent in our work and putting the interests of our students first;

We will be accountable for our actions, do what we say we will do and exceed expectations;

We will be passionate in our work and in our ambition for our students, our college and our university.
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A WARM WELCOME

I am delighted to present the Strategic Plan for Inverness College UHI for 2017/20 which sets out our ambition for our College and our commitment to supporting the continued economic development of our region in the next few years.

Inverness College UHI is the main provider of education and skills development in the Highland region and touches the lives of many. In August 2015 the College relocated to the stunning setting of Inverness Campus, and re-developed the Scottish School of Forestry in Balloch.

These recent investments are indicative of our commitment to providing our students with an experience that is second to none. We are confident that the progressive and innovative approach we take to our work is now matched by our facilities, which are inspiring staff and students alike.

Our focus is on providing seamless pathways that blur the boundaries between school and college, and college and university; and that support our students in the development of rewarding careers, and our region in its continued prosperity.

I hope you enjoy finding out more about us and our plans.

NEIL J STEWART
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
INVERNESS COLLEGE UHI
CONTEXT STATEMENT
Inverness College UHI is one of the largest of twelve colleges and research institutes that together comprise the University of the Highlands and Islands. Our Strategic Plan for 2017 – 2020 sets out our expectations of how the College will develop during the next three years and how we intend to contribute to the realisation of the University of the Highlands and Islands' strategic vision, as set out in the UHI Strategic Plan accessible at https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/about-uhi/strategy-and-planning/strategic-plan-en.pdf

The College has an income of approximately £25m and provides education and training for approximately 6,500 students, with over 2,600 of them attending on a full-time basis. In the last four years our higher education provision has grown significantly and, as the presence of the University of the Highlands and Islands in Inverness, we are the key provider of higher education in the region. The College’s provision however spans all Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels from foundation through to doctoral level study and as an organisation we pride ourselves on our ability to support the needs of all of our students, no matter what their level of study.

Inverness College UHI re-located to its new estate at Inverness Campus and the Scottish School of Forestry in Balloch in August 2015, marking the start of a new era for the institution. The College now has purpose built, world-class facilities, providing an inspiring environment within which to deliver post-compulsory education, skills development and research to support regional economic and community development.

The Inverness Campus project has been designed to maximise the benefits to the region from the co-location of education, industry and research. The College is proactively pursuing this agenda and has, since the move, already extended its research facilities, developing a genetics laboratory to support the work of Inverness College’s Rivers and Lochs Institute, housing this in the neighbouring An Lochran facility. As the campus expands and more facilities are developed, we will seek to expand further through collaborative ventures, finding efficient mechanisms through which we can achieve continued growth.

In recent years, the College has gone from strength to strength, growing provision, diversifying income streams and achieving several awards and external validation of its progress, not least, a judgement of ‘effective’ from Education Scotland, Investors in Young People, Investors in People ‘Gold’ and a CDN award for transformational change in the Highlands.

At the heart of our organisation is a commitment to parity of esteem for vocational and academic study. We value both equally and indeed seek to blur the boundaries between the two, providing meaningful experience that properly equips our students for progression to higher level study or to employment and a rewarding career. We provide work-based learning pathways that stretch from the school senior phase through to graduate-level study. We provide supported education for some of the most vulnerable in our community, as well as post-doctoral research opportunities in state-of-the-art laboratories. We aim to be the first port of call for anyone in the Highlands or beyond seeking post-compulsory education and training and as such we sit at the heart of the community, working in close partnership with regional agencies.

Each of our course teams works hand in hand with industry representatives and employers to ensure that our courses are relevant and responsive to employer need, creating the best possible opportunities for our graduates. As well as teaching relevant and current technical knowledge, we work to develop well-rounded students with the essential skills and attributes that will help them in the world of work.

Along with our community planning partners, we are working to support regional economic development, creating a regional skills-base that supports the development of existing businesses and attracts inward investment. Our curriculum planning is closely aligned to the regional Skills Investment Plan and the Regional Skills Assessment. We provide the national skills development needs of the Forestry Industry and support other key industries, not least, Engineering, Construction, Health and Social Care, Computing and Creative Industries.

This plan sets out our strategic aims and objectives that will inform our operational planning and take us through to 2020. I commend it to you.

DIANE RAWLINSON
PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
INVERNESS COLLEGE UHI
OPPORTUNITY & GROWTH IN STUDENT LIFE

STRATEGIC AIM

We will build a vibrant campus community that all of our students are proud of, and within which they are engaged and supported to reach their potential. We will strengthen our existing relationships between our students, staff, employers and the wider community to further increase student participation and the student voice.

OBJECTIVES

- To make Inverness College UHI a study destination of choice, providing an excellent student experience across every aspect of the student journey and maintaining high rates of student satisfaction, achievement and positive outcomes;
- To create a lively community of staff and students and develop further student participation in clubs, societies and other activities, and engagement with the wider community;
- To work with partners to develop Inverness as a ‘university city’ and ensure our students benefit fully from our unique location in the capital of the Highlands;
- To further embed the student voice to ensure its contribution to all aspects of college life;
- To further develop our accessible and inclusive support for students to enable all to achieve their potential.
STRATEGIC AIM

We will offer a progressive curriculum that is valued by our students, employers and the communities we serve, and that is delivered in a variety of ways to make it accessible to all. We will ensure the curriculum remains relevant, responsive to demand and aligned with employment opportunities, providing a range of progression pathways that contribute to the economic growth and social cohesion of our region.

OBJECTIVES

- To deliver a curriculum that is responsive to employer needs and the aspirations of the communities we serve, while stimulating new demand through innovation and the application of research;
- To provide our economy with a skilled and qualified workforce that supports local and regional growth and encourages inward investment;
- To ensure that our courses and the reach of our delivery make a difference to the life chances of the people in our most deprived or remote communities, and of those who face the greatest challenges;
- To strengthen progression routes through the entirety of our curriculum, identifying access and exit points and enabling progression through further education, higher education and postgraduate study;
- To ensure our curriculum equips all of our students with the attributes and essential skills that are valued by employers and communities and that will support their success in learning, life and work.
OPPORTUNITY & GROWTH IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

STRATEGIC AIM

Recognising that people have the greatest influence on our success, we will operate in a positive culture where we stretch ourselves to deliver the highest standards of service, support and delivery that exceeds expectations.

OBJECTIVES

- To embed or reflect our values and commitments in all of our work and through our processes, procedures and arrangements;
- To ensure that standards of professional practice for all staff are agreed and that we hold ourselves responsible and accountable for maintaining them;
- To ensure that our practice is aligned with national, sector and/or industry recognised standards and best practice, and to our values and commitments;
- To provide ongoing professional learning and development for all staff that fosters innovation and ensures a productive and appropriate balance between organisational and role specific goals and aspirations;
- To embed self evaluation and continuous quality improvement in all aspects of our work.
As a highly regarded organisation, we will attract and retain talented employees committed to achieving shared goals. We will create a supportive, collaborative and dynamic environment where students and staff are inspired to learn and develop. Our high performance culture will be underpinned by a dispersed leadership model, within which teams are empowered to deliver and share accountability for outcomes.

- To engage in proactive workforce planning, to attract and equip our staff with the skills and attributes required to meet our on-going and future needs;
- To work with UHI partners and national agencies to develop conditions of service and working practices appropriate for a tertiary organisation in the 21st Century;
- To continue to embed our values and commitments in our working practice to develop a distinctive organisational identity and to ensure consistency in culture;
- To create opportunities for leadership at every level empowering individuals and teams to deliver creative solutions;
- To engage proactively with one another, communicating effectively and building positive professional relationships.
We will build upon our successes in research by strengthening our impact and excellence and growing our regional and international reputation. We will continue to support and grow an innovative and inspired postgraduate researcher community. Our research will directly inform innovation and entrepreneurship activity in key sectors regionally and internationally.

• To build upon our established platform of research excellence, expanding activity in our research centres and across academic teams;
• To ensure our research has relevance, application and impact through development of innovative partnerships with schools, key sector partners and academic partners, and through effective communication of results;
• To maximise the opportunities for growing our postgraduate researcher community, creating a strong research culture for our early career researcher development;
• To ensure research is embedded across our curriculum presenting opportunities for staff and students to be challenging and innovative in their professional practice and supporting integrated career progression;
• To expand and develop innovative research and entrepreneurship and grow our knowledge exchange activity.
We will ensure our continuing financial stability by developing income streams and promoting efficient, effective service delivery. We will work collaboratively to enhance the prosperity of the regional economy. We are committed to acting responsibly by protecting our environment, maintaining and developing our infrastructure and managing our risks.

- To continue to develop our research, commercial and international income streams through relevant curriculum that is aligned to our strategic growth objectives;
- To forge new partnerships, strengthen existing ones and work collaboratively to maximise our region’s prosperity and enhance our brand;
- To deliver first class, efficient and effective services that provide best value;
- To continue to develop our financial planning, risk management and business continuity processes to actively mitigate risk, protect our reputation and ensure our ongoing organisational sustainability;
- To progress and maintain our inspirational estates, facilities and ICT infrastructure, maximising the student experience and leveraging commercial opportunity;
- To respect and protect our environment through effective waste management, energy efficient practices and promoting greener travel.
For many students, it will bridge the gap between education and the workplace, providing valuable employability skills and work experience. We are hoping it will encourage more pupils to pursue a career in this sector upon finishing education.”

MR. MURPHY

Pupils from Culloden Academy have enjoyed the recent introduction of the National 4 Rural Skills programme to their curriculum. Championed by Guidance Teacher Gavin Murphy, with support from the Scottish School of Forestry at Inverness College UHI, the course has been met with an enthusiastic response.

Mr Murphy said: “Our aim is to get more pupils to consider land or animal based careers by exposing them to the opportunities through the Rural Skills programme. We currently have thirteen of our S5 & S6 pupils on this course, and it has inspired many of them to consider a career in this sector.

“The course is something different and is just what is needed to ensure we have something for everyone when it comes to our course choice options for S4, 5 & 6. For many students, it will bridge the gap between education and the workplace, providing valuable employability skills and work experience. We are hoping it will encourage more pupils to pursue a career in this sector upon finishing education.”

Laurence Campbell, Forestry Lecturer at the Scottish School of Forestry at Inverness College UHI, provides practical instruction and supervision across a variety of rural skills. Laurence said: “The programme builds employability skills and acts as an introduction to land based industries whilst making sure all tasks are undertaken safely and the students introduced to risk assessment from an early stage.”

Pupils enrolled in Rural Skills work closely with local employers, undertaking work experience in areas such as estate maintenance and soft landscaping, as well as learning new skills in tree, plant and wildlife management.

Working in partnership with the Rural Skills programme is Nairn-based Cawdor Estates, a forest management service. Steve Conolly, Managing Director, has worked in forestry for over 30 years, 20 of those with Cawdor Estates.

Steve said: “Cawdor Estates is keen to encourage a greater awareness of the rural environment amongst young people, so we were therefore very keen to support the Rural Skills programme by providing sites where pupils can learn the vital hands-on skills that will equip them for work in the forestry sector.

“It’s a great opportunity and one which I wish had been available when I was at school.”

Pupils spending time at Cawdor Estates get involved in a number of diverse practices, including tree planting, forestry maintenance, pruning and brashing. This variety allows pupils to identify their specific areas of interest, giving an insight into what a career in forestry entails.
ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGY

VIKTORIA SZILVAS

Architectural Technology students get the opportunity to work on striking new design projects, enabling them to see their hard work become reality. Viktoria Szilvas is a perfect example. The 37-year-old, from Bught, Inverness, triumphed in a contest to design a new shelter for passengers waiting at the Clansman Harbour site run by cruise tour operator Loch Ness by Jacobite. Jacob Simpson, 21, from Crown, Inverness, and Andrew Ashburn from Munlochy, received special commendations.

Nineteen students developed detailed designs and submitted them for judging by Jacobite’s managing director, Freda Newton, and MAKAR project manager and designer Steven Martin, as part of a specially commissioned third year project.

Viktoria said: “Working on a live project was really inspiring. My aim was to produce a design that was sustainable and contemporary and provided easy and comfortable access for all users. I also wanted it to be easy to build using locally sourced materials.”

Viktoria’s design took a simple contemporary form, which included charred larch, feature openings and a modern take on elevated seating. As winner, Viktoria will receive the MAKAR award, which will see her gain work experience with the firm as she takes her concept through the planning and technical phases to reality. By May 2017 her shelter will be in place, giving her a physical example of her work prior to graduation.

Ross Cairns, Programme Leader for Architectural Technology at Inverness College UHI, added: “This chance to see a project through to completion in time for graduation really inspired the students to deliver some truly excellent designs and technical work.”

For more information: www.inverness.uhi.ac.uk
The work placement with Morgan Sindall was the final piece of the puzzle for me. It went well and the company also gave me four extra weeks works experience as a ‘chain boy’ (someone who shadows a qualified Engineer).”

WILLIAM WATTS

During S5 at Fortrose Academy, William Watts included a Foundation Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering as one of his option choices. William attended college one day a week undertaking a National Certificate in Civil Engineering and also gained practical skills that would prepare him for a work placement activities.

“I was interested in Engineering and my Head Teacher suggested that I think about a Foundation Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering, so I researched it and decided to give it a try. The range of subjects studied at college related to what I was doing in school but different because they linked to how they are used in industry. The work placement with Morgan Sindall was the final piece of the puzzle for me. It went well and the company also gave me four extra weeks works experience as a ‘chain boy’ (someone who shadows a qualified Engineer).”

Morgan Sindall were impressed with William and agreed to recruit him to become a Modern Apprentice Trainee Engineer. William plans to progress to a Graduate Level Apprenticeship after 2 years, when he will commence his HND as well as becoming a member of the Institute of Civil Engineering. William points out; “When I started, it took me about three months to understand how many roles Civil Engineering covers, but now that I know the areas, I know that I’d like to be a Site Engineer. It would have been difficult to have gone straight into this type of work after school as you need the underpinning knowledge to understand how to do the job. So I would advise anyone thinking about Civil Engineering to just go for it! If you find out it’s not the career path you’d like to take, then it’s not the end of the world.”

FOUNDATION APPRENTICESHIP
WILLIAM WATTS

‘BREAGHA’ COMMERCIAL HAIR AND BEAUTY SALON

Our first commercial salon team were all graduates and students from our HND Beauty programme; Donna McKenzie, Amanda Afrin, Emma Niven and Lorraine Patterson, who had all been studying at Inverness College UHI for three years.

For all of the salon team the chance to stay with the college and further enhance their practical skills by developing a business idea was too good an opportunity to miss. The salon has provided openings for the team to develop entrepreneurial approaches to employment, with the specific objective of developing first-hand the skills and knowledge required for taking their initial steps into self-employment.

From day one, each of the team had ownership of how they wished to shape their own business, being able to identify the services on offer and promote their own signature skills to potential clients. Additional training was provided to the salon team by CREATE, supporting them to realise their potential and explore their own business concepts. Donna, Emma and Lorraine are all now their own bosses, using the experience within ‘Breagha’ as their catalyst to an exciting future career within the hair and beauty industry.
Professor Eric Verspoor and Dr Mark Coulson of the Rivers and Lochs Institute were recently awarded a competitive UK Research Council (BBSRC-NERC) grant to undertake work on the identification of molecular genomic markers for domestication in the Atlantic salmon.

The project is led by Professor Verspoor and is partnered with Professors Carlos Garcia de Leaniz and Sonia Consuegra of Swansea University, and involves collaborations with researchers at Marine Scotland Science, the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research, Aquagen Ltd, Norwegian Centre for Integrative Genomics, Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute Northern Ireland, University College Cork Ireland and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The grant builds on the Institute’s internationally recognized expertise in molecular genetics and its application to studies of genetic interactions between escaped farm fish and wild populations, particularly in respect of salmon stocks in Scotland. Professor Verspoor was previously invited to advise the Canadian government on potential farm-wild interactions related to farming in Eastern Canada, and has recently published work on stocks in western Scotland. Dr Coulson was previously engaged by the Rivers and Fisheries Trust of Scotland to undertake a survey of levels of genetic mixing of farm and wild stocks across Scotland.

The award of this grant, and their recent involvement with partners in the production of a peer-reviewed paper on genetic interactions between farm and wild salmon, ensures that they and the RLI will be recognized as one of the key world centres for this area of research.

The purpose of the research is two-fold. At a more academic level, it will increase understanding of the genetic basis of heritable changes to farm stocks due to domestication and selective breeding, and increase understanding of these processes in farm animals generally. At a practical level, it will provide genetic markers that can be used to screen salmon in the wild to accurately estimate levels of genetic mixing, if and where it occurs.

It also will provide the tools needed to study the relative fitness of salmon of farm and mixed farm-wild origin in rivers to understand the impacts that mixing may have on the productivity and vitality of wild stocks. The work is expected to lead to a number of peer-reviewed science papers and provide the basis for undertaking applied work on Scottish salmon stocks in the future.
WELCOME TO OUR CAMPUS
FÁILTE GU AR N-ÁRAINN

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