

**MINUTES OF THE COURT MEETING (UC)  
UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018 AT 09:30 HRS  
DRUMOSSIE HOTEL INVERNESS**

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**PRESENT:** Garry Coutts (Chair)  
Professor Fiona McLean (Vice Chair)  
Professor Clive Mulholland (UHI Principal and Vice-chancellor)  
Andy Rogers (Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee)  
Willie Printie (Chair of Audit Committee)  
Alistair Dodds  
Neil Stewart  
Holly Scrimgeour (President HISA – in part)  
Callum Stephen  
Rosemary McCormack  
Anton Edwards Rector  
Dr Gareth Davies  
Roddy Burns  
Linda Kirkland  
David Sandison  
Heidi May  
Poonam Malik

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Alan Simpson  
Dr Sarah Helps – Observer independent  
Kirsty Macpherson – Observer independent  
Professor Neil Simco (Vice Principal Research & Impact)  
Professor Crichton Lang (Deputy Principal)  
Dr Diane Rawlinson (Vice Principal Further Education)  
Fiona Larg (Chief Operating Officer & Secretary COOS)  
Lydia Rohmer (Vice Principal Tertiary)  
Iain MacMillan (Vice Principal Strategic Harmonisation & Operational Efficiencies)  
Roger Sendall (Head of Governance & Records Management)

**APOLOGIES:** Dr Michael Foxley (Chair of FE Regional Board)  
Andrea Robertson  
Dr Jeff Howarth (Vice Principal Enterprise)

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ITEM	ACTION
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>1.1 Welcome and Quorum.</b>	
The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming new members and thanking all who attended and facilitated the previous day's workshop event.	
It was noted that a quorum was present.	

## **1.2 Declarations of Interest:**

The Chair declared an interest in agenda item 4.1. It was noted that the Chair would leave the room for discussion in relation to this item.

## **1.3 Notification of any other Business:**

None.

## **1.4 Starring**

Item 2.4, 4.1, 4.3, 7.2, 7.4 and 7.5 were starred for discussion.

## **2 MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

### **2.1 Approval of Court Minutes**

The Court resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018 (UC18-217).

### **2.2 Matters Arising**

The Court noted the Matters Arising paper UC18-218.

### **2.3 Review of Delegated Decisions**

None

### **2.4 Minutes from Committees of Court**

The Court reviewed the draft minutes of the following committee meetings:

- UC18-219a - Finance and General Purposes Committee of 6<sup>th</sup> June 20<sup>th</sup> 2018.
- UC18-219b - Audit Committee of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018.
- UC18-219c – Further Education Regional Board of 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018.
- UC18-219d – Academic Council Report from 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018.
- UC18-219e – Nominations Committee of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018.
- UC18-219f – Honorary Awards Committee of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018.
- UC18-219g – Strategic Programme Assurance Group of 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
- UC18-219h – Integration Board final minute of 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

The following points were noted:

- The Chair of FGPC explained that the University Budget had been considered by the committee and would be presented to Court today for approval with the endorsement of the Partnership Council and FGPC.
- The Chair of FGPC reported that the committee was continuing to monitor occupancy of the student residences/recruitment for 2018/19. It was noted that there had been a recent upturn in applications for rooms and that the appointment of a Residences Officer was regarded as a positive intervention, however, significant vacancies remained and the situation was now being monitored on a weekly basis. Short and medium term mitigations were being considered.
- A meeting of Academic Partner Finance Chairs would be convened later in 2018.

- The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the committee had noted positive progress in relation to the completion of outstanding agreed management actions. It was noted that the COOS would circulate a copy of the internal audit report in relation to IT Disaster Recovery to members for information.
- The Chair of Court explained that FERB had held lengthy discussions in relation to the allocation of regional FE funding grants and to the distribution of rurality funding in particular. A compromise had been identified to minimise financial turbulence, however, this was agreed by a majority of members rather than unanimously and further work was needed to identify a sustainable future distribution model whereby rural funding allocations were provided to the most rural colleges whilst also ensuring that larger colleges were appropriately funded for over delivery when this assisted the university to meet regional targets.
- The Chair of Court encouraged members to nominate individuals for honorary awards for consideration by the honorary awards committee. It was noted that the criteria would be published within the documents section of Admin Control for reference.
- The Chair of Court reported that SPAG had met the previous week to review progress with a number of strategic projects. The minutes of that meeting were not currently available, however, most significant was the initiation of a partnership branding consultation being led by the VPT.

COOS

HGRM

### 3 CHAIRMAN/PRINCIPALS COMMENTS

Court noted the quarterly status report UC18-220 introduced by the Principal and Vice Chancellor. Court was pleased to note potential substantive new developments/partnerships with the Ministry of Defence and Boeing in Argyll and Moray.

Court considered that there would be a benefit in all AP Boards of Management receiving the papers as a standing item on their meeting agendas to ensure that AP board members had sight of key developments and initiatives across the partnership.

Court requested further information and presentations on significant developments at future meetings.

#### 3.1 Integration Update

The Chair provided Court with a summary of the events that had resulted in the winding up of the Integration Board on 24<sup>th</sup> May and he thanked all members of the Integration Board and support staff for their participation and genuine effort to drive improvements for students and staff across the partnership over recent months.

The Chair explained that whilst he was disappointed that the process to integrate four colleges with the University had stalled following a meeting with the Minister of Further Education Higher Education and Science on 18<sup>th</sup> May, he was encouraged that the Minister had accepted that there was a genuine need for change and he was committed to maintaining momentum and would lead a University Assembly event on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018 with wide participation from all stakeholders with the aim of identifying a positive roadmap for change that would deliver a financially sustainable university model with clearly defined benefits for learners and staff that was acceptable to the majority of partners.

Court members highlighted some concern with the ability of a large assembly to reach a clear consensus and the need to ensure that governance structures and expectations were

appropriately defined. However, Court agreed that it was important to demonstrate that a genuine opportunity was provided to all stakeholders to contribute to important discussions on the future development of the University and on this basis the assembly would be an important forum.

It was agreed to upload the Capita report to the documents section of Admin Control as a background/reference material for the benefit of new Court members.

HGRM

## **4 STRATEGY & PLANNING**

### **4.1 Extension To Chair's Term of Office**

Court agreed to approve a recommendation presented by the Nominations Committee to extend the Chair's current term of office until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. It was noted that this would ensure consistency during a period of change and with a large number of new independent members joining Court.

Exit Chair  
for item  
4.1. VC to  
Chair.

### **4.2 Court Memberships & Skills Matrix**

Court noted paper UC18-222.

### **4.3 Working Group on Equality & Diversity in Governance**

The Vice Chair highlighted changes made to the University's recruitment process through engagement with the Equality Challenge Unit for new independent members and the significant improvements that had been achieved in terms of attracting interest from a diverse and high calibre field of applicants with skills and experience that was directly relevant to the University's requirements.

The Vice Chair also highlighted activities that were being progressed in relation to the Aurora Programme and Athena Swan accreditation. It was noted that an Athena Swan progression report would be presented to Court at a later meeting.

VPR&I

## **5 STRATEGY & PLANNING**

### **5.1 Student Residences Occupancy Update**

Court noted paper UC18-223.

### **5.2 Estates Position Paper**

Court approved paper UC18-224 for onwards submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

## **6 GOVERNANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Appointments to Assigned College Boards**

Court noted paper UC18-225.

### **6.2 Amended Articles of Association**

Court noted paper UC18-226.

## **6.3 Court Effectiveness Review**

Court noted paper UC18-227.

## **6.4 GDPR Implementation**

Court noted paper UC18-228.

## **6.5 Risk Management**

Court noted paper UC18-229 comprising the high level risk register.

## **7 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE**

### **7.1 Academic Partner Financial Monitoring**

Court noted paper UC18-230.

### **7.2 2017/2018 Quarter 3 Reforecast**

The Court approved paper UC18-231.

### **7.3 Quarter 3 Management Accounts**

Court noted the paper UC18-232.

### **7.4 2018/2019 University Budget**

Following due consideration Court agreed to accept the recommendation of FGPC and to approve the budget as presented within paper UC18-233.

Court noted that the University would not achieve its CPI target in relation to retaining an operating surplus of 3% and further narrative information was requested in future finance reports to clearly set out realistic prospects for building reserves to invest in the future development of the University. FGPC to liaise with the DOCR.

DOCR

### **7.5 CPI Research**

Court approved the recommendation set out within paper UC18-234 to amend the Critical Performance Indicator in relation to research grant income to 2% year on year growth.

#### **7.5.1 CPI Update Report**

Court noted paper UC18-234a.

### **7.6 2017/2018 FE & HE Student Activity Figures**

Court noted paper UC18-235.

### **7.7 Finance System Convergence Project**

Court noted paper UC18-236.

### **7.8 Development & Fundraising Strategy**

Court noted paper UC18-237.

## **8 ACADEMIC BUSINESS**

### **8.1 National Student Survey**

Court noted paper UC18-238.

## **9 REPORTS**

### **9.1 HISA**

Court noted paper UC18-239. The Chair thanked Holly Scrimgeour for her significant and highly successful contribution to the development of HISA and to the University Court over her term of office.

### **9.2 University Foundation**

Court received a verbal report from the Rector in relation to recent activities and also noted the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018 (UC18-240) and the planned date and theme for the next Foundation conference to be hosted by North Highland College in Dornoch.

**10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018 (Court) – 26<sup>th</sup> September (Assembly).