

University of the Highlands & Islands

UHI Foundation

Thu 19 November 2020, 13:00 - Thu 19 November 2020, 16:00

By VC Webex Teams

Attendees


Board members

Anton Edwards (Rector - Chair of Foundation), Crichton Lang (Interim Principal & Vice Chancellor), Fiona Larg (Chief Operating Officer & Secretary), Roger Sendall (Director of Corporate Governance), Florence Jansen (HISA President), Jack Shehata (HISA Representative), Liz Ashworth, Duncan Martin, Eric McVicar (- in part), Thomas Prag, Tom Inglis (Vice Chair of Foundation), David Gauld, Andrew Rae, Dr Cllr Stephen Clackson, Derek Bedford, Cllr Amy Taylor, Roy Templeton, Evelyn Johnston, Lewis Vernal, Cllr Claire Feaver, Michael Macmillan (- in part), Michael Smith, Duncan Ferguson (- in part), Max Brown (Programme Director), Alison Wilson (Head of Development), Susan Szymborski (Communications Officer)

Meeting minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

The Rector opened the meeting and noted that a quorum was present. Apologies were received from Phil Masterson, Seonaid Mustard, Zosia Fraser, Catherine Handley, Rev Sarah Murray, Pauline Parr, Andrew Scott, Angus MacLeod, John Buchan, Lord MacKay of Clashfern, Michael Breslin, Ian Horne, Paul Holden, Allan Bransbury.

 Foundation Agenda - 19 November 2020.pdf

1.1. - Declarations of Interest

None

1.2. - Notification of any other competent business

The Interim Principal & Vice Chancellor asked for an additional item to be added to the agenda at the end of the meeting.

Foundation agreed to discuss agenda items 3.1 and 5.1 first as it was noted that the Chief Operating Officer and Secretary would need to attend an operational meeting between 1:30-and 2:30pm.

2. MINUTES

2.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2019

The minutes of the above meeting were reviewed and approved (FN19-11).

 FN19-20-11 Minutes_UHI Foundation - 14 November 2019_141119.pdf

2.2. Matters Arising

Foundation considered the paper setting out actions and matters arising from previous meetings.

 FN20-21-01 Matters and actions arising.pdf

2.3. Review of Any Delegated Decisions

None.

3. HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION

The President of HISA provided the Foundation with a verbal report in support of her circulated paper (FN20-02). The following key points were highlighted:

It was reported that HISA have had several new starters. Most notably, Flo Jansen has replaced Alan Simpson as the new HISA President, and Pam Urquhart has taken over from Graeme Kirkpatrick as the Chief Executive (Interim). All other HISA activity updates are noted in the report.

 [FN20-21-02 HISA Update UHI Foundation.pdf](#)

4. REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

4.1. Report from the Principal/UHI Status Report - including response to Covid19 pandemic

Christine Shaw

The Foundation noted the quarterly status reports provided by Executive Office senior managers and academic partner principals.

Foundation also received a presentation from the Interim Principal & Vice Chancellor in relation to activities and challenges associated with managing the University partnership over the last twelve months with a particular focus on operations and business continuity measures related to the ongoing pandemic situation. A copy of the presentation slides is appended to and forms a part of this minute.

The following key points were noted:

- The University has been very successful in terms of implementing adjustments and modifying delivery in order to keep the organisation and key functions effective despite the many difficulties and challenges associated with the pandemic and physical distancing regulations.
- Recognition was given to staff at all levels across the partnership for their continued hard work in helping senior management navigate their way through rigorous government and public health requirements.
- Huge effort has gone into ensuring the smooth continuation of the student experience in teaching and research, and the safety and wellbeing of everyone in the institution.
- During the crisis, the University and all academic partners have pulled together in a renewed and positive way improving the behaviour and culture of the organisation.

Action: The Principal requested that Meg Bateman's inaugural poem, "Let the Northern Land Shine" be circulated after the meeting. It was noted that the poem was gifted to the University to mark the achievement of University status ten years ago and reflects on the impact of the creation of the University. The poem, written in both Gaelic and English, will form a key part in future branding of the University and to help celebrate our tenth anniversary.

 [FN20-21-03 September 2020 SMT and AP quarterly report.pdf](#)

 [4.1 Foundation - CWL Presentation.pdf](#)


4.2. Economic Impact Report/10 years of UHI - Presentation from Fiona Larg

Foundation received a presentation from the Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary in connection with an independent Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) review report that had been commissioned by the University and undertaken by Biggar Economics. A copy of the presentation slides is appended to and forms a part of this minute.

The following key points were highlighted:

- The university is making a significant positive impact across the entire Highlands and Islands region. The independent report will be used to evidence the added value and capacity of the University to deliver economic benefits to communities across the region and will provide a robust evidence base for key stakeholders and assist the University to securing funding and investment in future projects and developments.
- The EIA report will also be used to help inform development of the University's new 5-year strategic plan, not only in terms of what we have achieved over the last period, but also to identifying gaps and opportunities.

 [FN20-21-04 economic-impact-report-september-2020.pdf](#)

 [4.2 Presentation - UHI Economic Impact BiGGAR Economics Foundation.pdf](#)

4.3. University Assembly & Programme Board Update

Foundation received a presentation from the University Assembly & Programme Board Project Manager comprising an update on progress and changes implemented across the partnership since November 2019.

A copy of the presentation slides is appended to and forms a part of this minute.

 [4.3 Foundation Nov20 MB.pdf](#)

4.4. Plenary: Including Q&A on items 4.1 - 4.3


The Rector hosted a plenary discussion and question and answer session in relation to agenda items 4.1-4.3. The following points were noted:

- The 2020 Foundation election and May business meeting had been postponed as a result of the current pandemic, however, the Rector had continued to engage with the University Court on behalf of Foundation. The Rector had written four letters to Foundation members and Court over the period and he thanked all those who had responded and contributed to the dialogue. It was noted that the themes of the letters was closely aligned to the topics and issues discussed at items 4.1 to 4.3 of the meeting agenda.
- Foundation were particularly pleased to note the Gaelic dedication/engagement.

4.5. Development Team presentation

Foundation received a brief presentation from the Head of Development in relation to the work of the Development Team over the past twelve months with a particular focus on digital poverty initiatives and future opportunities and plans.

A copy of the presentation slides is appended to and forms a part of this minute.

 4.5 Presentation - Development Office Overview for Foundation Nov 2020.pdf

4.6. Rector Election - Procedures and Process

Foundation noted the process and key dates associated with the 2020 Rector election process. It was noted that the actual procedures and process had previously been approved by Foundation in accordance with a July 2020 election, however, Foundation had agreed to postpone the 2020 election by one year and to extend the term of the current Rector until July 2021 due to the coronavirus situation.

 FN20-21-05 Foundation Election .pdf


4.7. Planning around the University's 10th birthday anniversary celebrations

Foundation received an update from the University's Communications Manager on planned activities and celebrations to mark the University's tenth anniversary. The following points were highlighted:

- The 10th anniversary will provide an opportunity to celebrate our achievements and to tell the story of our unique partnership. It will enable the University to highlight our contributions and to thank our staff, students, and supporters.
- communications
- university birthday design motif, media publicity, blogs and competitions.
- Members of Foundation are invited to engage in the activities and also requested to contact the University marketing team directly if they have any suggestions questions or comments.

4.8. Consult on Shetland UHI Ltd being admitted to the partnership

The Foundation were consulted on paper FN20-21-06 in relation to the proposed merger of two academic partners Shetland College UHI and NAFC Marine Centre. It was noted that the proposal was fully supported by Scottish Government as a means to deliver a more effective delivery model within the islands and to create a new legal entity with limited liability for local governors. Foundation unanimously agreed that it would be appropriate to admit the new entity as an academic partner of the University in due course.

 FN20-21-06 Foundation - Shetland.pdf

5. ITEMS FROM FOUNDATION MEMBERS

5.1. Revitalise Foundation - discussion led by David Gauld

Members were asked to reflect on what the Foundation does and what it actually achieves. Foundation discussed these fundamental questions. A suggestion was made to extend membership of Foundation to all new graduates as a way of revitalizing the Foundation and encouraging wider debate.

The Director of Corporate Governance advised that the current articles of association permit a broad category of membership, however, membership is restricted to a maximum of 120. Amending the articles is not a particularly straight forward process and takes a lot of time and consultation as changes need to be agreed by the Privy Council.

Members agreed that there was a need to find better ways of getting a wider age range of people interested and involved in the University Foundation and agreed that this subject was worthy of further discussion and consideration at future meetings.

 FN20-21-07 Revitalise Foundation.pdf

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS - as notified above

The Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor informed Foundation that Fiona Larg, Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary had announced her intention to retire in April 2021. The Interim Principal and members of Foundation expressed sincere thanks and gratitude for her many achievements over the years including her significant contribution to assisting with achieving the award of University title.

7. FUTURE MEETING DATES

7.1. 12 May 2021 - business meeting

7.2. 25th June 2021 (provisional) Rector Election Hustings

7.3. 18 November 2021 - business meeting

