

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes of Meeting held on
Thursday 27 January 2022
At 09.30 by Teams

Present:

Seonaid Mustard (Convenor)	Alistair Fowlie
Stuart Cruickshank	David Patterson
Hugh Hamilton	Caroline Webster

In Attendance:

Carolyn Thomson (Officer)	Eleanor Melton (Minutes)
Elaine Sutherland (Clerk)	

Item		Action	Date
SG.22.01.01	(i) Resignations		
1.1	Rosemary McCormack's 4-year tenure as the teaching staff member has ended.		
	(ii) Appointments		
1.2	Alistair Fowlie has been appointed as the new teaching staff member.		
SG.22.01.02	Apologies for Absence		
2.1	An apology for absence was received from Paul Mitchell.		
SG.22.01.03	Any Additional Declarations of Interest including specific items on this Agenda		
3.1	There were no additional declarations of interest.		
SG.22.01.04	Draft Minutes of Staff Governance Committee meeting held 18 November 2021		
4.1	The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed: Hugh Hamilton Seconded: Stuart Cruickshank		
SG.22.01.05	Draft Matters Arising of meeting held on 18 November 2021		
5.1 Action	All matters arising were noted as complete, apart from: <u>7.3</u> : Elaine to investigate the pros and cons of using Admin Control versus SharePoint, as a portal for sharing Board papers with members, and to report back to the Board at their meeting on 24 March.	ES	24-03-22
SG.22.01.06	Emerging Issues		
6.1	Seonaid recalled that at the last meeting, it had been noted that staff morale was not as high as it could be due to a combination of factors, including COVID-19, the cyber		

	security incident, and the senior management vacancies. She was interested to hear whether morale has improved since then.		
SG.22.01.07	HR Director's Report		
7.1	<p>Carolyn spoke to her report for the period November 2021 to January 2022, highlighting the undernoted issues.</p> <p><u>Fit Notes</u>: The report included an NJNC circular that applies to all staff, detailing temporary legislative changes to the issue of Fit Notes for Statutory Sick Pay during December and January.</p> <p><u>Side Table (Lecturing)</u>: No agreement has yet been reached on the 21/22 pay award. The final pay offer made by the management side was also included in the report.</p> <p><u>GTCS</u>: Professional registration of teaching staff by GTCS is underway. Staff were going through the process, which is not without its challenges e.g. the process began at the start of the term and staff were given a one week turnaround to provide documentation. With regard to the successful pan-UHI validation event, specific feedback for Moray College UHI included a request that the Professional Review and Development scheme refer to the resources on the GTCS website.</p> <p>During discussion, Alistair commented that the GTCS registration process is heading towards something very positive but that an element of communications falls between two stools and results in a lot of triangular questioning.</p>		
7.2	<p><u>Side Table (Support) - Job Evaluation</u>: The aim of this national project had been to have all relevant support posts in the sector evaluated by the end of 2021. Data was currently being quality checked and pay data validated. The next stage of the project will be salary modelling.</p> <p>Stuart indicated that there was huge frustration amongst support staff that the job evaluation process was taking so long. He believed there has been an under-appreciation of how varied the roles are across Scotland's colleges. In response to a query from Alistair, David advised that the outcome of job evaluation will have a significant impact on the college. The Scottish Government were considering a £50m cut across the sector for next year and the outcome of this, together with any cumulative pay rises, would be difficult to absorb.</p> <p>Following discussion, during which it was noted that the delay in the job evaluation process was outwith the control of the college, David agreed to continue to use his weekly newsletter to provide updates to staff.</p>		
7.3	<u>Side Table (Support) - Pay</u> : Carolyn had received a copy of the management final offer for support staff earlier today, which she agreed to circulate to the committee.		
Action		CT	Immediate

7.5	<p><u>JCC/JNC Update</u>: Carolyn gave a verbal update on the items covered at the Joint JCC meeting held on 21 January, the only JCC meeting since the last SGC meeting. A national menopause policy is being developed and it had been indicated that it was due by the end of March, but the college would look at the draft policy to establish whether there is anything that can be implemented in advance.</p> <p><u>Organisational Culture KPIs</u>: The college Staff Sickness Absence Rate was currently higher than 3%. If we meet the target this year, it will be narrowly. Covid related absences are included in this measurement, and a number of staff currently have serious illnesses. As a result of the HR business practice model, Carolyn hoped that staff who are ill feel they are being supported. Stuart commented that the number is likely to increase, as staff are expected to return to the workplace. A large percentage of staff have been home working and have continued to work even when ill. Staff are maybe not calling in sick when working from home in the same way as they would if they were working in the “office”.</p> <p><u>Operational Plan 2021/22</u>: Carolyn gave a verbal update on the organisational culture objectives, including that CMT meetings will now be re-focused to make sure they are business-focused, rather than that of a ‘catch up’ nature. Alistair indicated that the last CMT had been one of the best CMT meetings he had attended where staff members contributed to the meeting.</p> <p>Reference was made to the First Minister’s COVID-19 update from 25 January. It was noted that it was difficult to plan ahead when the situation was still fluid and sectoral guidance is awaited. Line managers are determining appropriate working arrangements for their teams at the current time, but it is imperative that professional dialogue between teams takes place to ensure that any unintended consequences are resolved.</p>		
SG.22.01.08	Culture and Values		
8.1	<p>Carolyn reminded the committee that a number of short life working groups had been set up following the 2019 staff survey to take a deeper look into some of the issues raised. The majority of the actions arising from these SLWGs are complete while a couple are very much underway, but she hoped these too would be complete by the next meeting. She would share this report with the JCC and place it along with the staff survey on the Moray Hub as a ‘you said, we did’ type piece.</p>		
8.2	<p>Members expressed their appreciation of the work done to make staff feel safe, valued and supported. Hugh commented that the table of actions was a perfect example of something that could be held on a SharePoint site. Seonaid suggested that this work should be shared with the Board.</p>		

8.3	In response to a request from Alistair, Carolyn agreed to provide members with a list of the Short Life Working Groups and their members at the next meeting on 12 May.	CT	12-05-22
	<i>Alistair left the meeting at 10.20am</i>		
SG.22.01.09	Update on Staff Development Activities		
9.1	The committee noted an update on staff development activities. A staff development day had been held on January 6 th , the programme for which was included in the report. The events were non-compulsory but they had been well-attended and the feedback was positive. An evaluation of the day was being carried out and will come to the next meeting.		
9.2	<p>Hugh commented that it would be good to see how proposals generated at 'Blue Sky Days' were progressed and sought assurances that that teams are taking their practices forward and looking to the future. Carolyn explained the background to blue sky days, how they came about and the idea behind them. Feedback in relation to the Blue Sky Days had been contradictory with teaching staff feeling they wanted to determine what to do on the days and support staff preferring more led approaches. Stuart indicated that because of daily pressures, it was difficult to assign a whole day for admin centre staff to undertake development work but instead it was integrated throughout the academic cycle, usually around key events. This amounted to around 2 days in total, but he acknowledged that he was not good at documenting that development had taken place. Carolyn pointed out that a reporting form had been set up for SharePoint to do this and she would report on this in her annual report.</p> <p>Hugh suggested that rather than blue sky 'days' there could be blue sky afternoons. These should be an opportunity to have fun and think about what comes next. David reminded members that his fifth priority for this session was to plan for a positive future for the college and this was an invitation to stop, think and have ideas.</p>		
9.3	<p>It was noted that a couple of sessions delivered by Age Scotland about planning for the future had been omitted from section 1.2 of the report but that Carolyn would add these retrospectively.</p> <p>Carolyn updated the committee on the new Health and Safety training (iHASCO) of which 5 modules had been issued. This has had a positive response from staff who have completed it. Elaine provided positive feedback on the updated online corporate induction and the iHASCO training.</p>		
9.3	Erasmus was briefly discussed with the committee being made aware that there are currently 3 students attending for semester 2, with Erasmus ending in March 2023.		

SG.22.01.10	HR Policies due for Review		
	(i) New Flexible Working Policy and Procedure		
10.1	<p>Carolyn presented for consideration, an updated flexible working policy and procedure, which had been considered by the HR Policy Review Group and SLT, and impact assessed. The new procedure brought together the shorter working year procedure and the previous flexible working procedure. A brief description of the changes was included.</p> <p>Stuart questioned whether the policy would apply retrospectively or to requests for the future. Carolyn clarified that it would need to be completed for any member of staff who would like to work from home or work on a hybrid basis following the lifting of restrictions. However, if anything changes nationally, the policy will require updating.</p>		
SG.22.01.12	Health and Safety Update		
	(i) Draft Minutes of Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on 20 January 2022		
12.1	<p>David provided a brief Health and Safety update due to the minutes of the last meeting being unavailable. Among the items discussed were two changes to the Health and Safety procedures manual, including with regard to the use of hand sanitiser. There was an issue at Linkwood with ventilation in some rooms. In response, twenty mobile air purifier machines have been purchased and allocated on a priority basis. The hospitality team had recently attended fire extinguisher training, which had been very well-received. We are currently in the process of moving from SHE to RiskX, the Health and Safety reporting tool and the first training is being provided for key staff. Health and Safety monitoring checklists are currently being reviewed, following feedback from the January H&S meeting that the checklists are not always appropriate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>David left the meeting at 10.47am</i></p>		
SG.22.01.11	Risk Register - Risks relating to SGC areas of responsibility		
11.1	An extract from the Board Register relating to the areas under the remit of the committee was circulated. In response to a question from the Convenor, Elaine explained that the Chair of the Audit Committee had made her aware of the requirement on committees, other than the Audit Committee, to review key areas of risk relevant to them.		
11.2	During discussion, Seonaid suggested an amendment to the wording of Future Mitigating Actions 2 relating to risk 12, such that 'Covid-19...is likely to maintain current high retention levels. The committee also agreed that changes be made to the scoring of the 3 residual risks. Risk 12 relating to retaining a workforce, should be lower; risk 17 relating to project delays should be higher; and risk 29 relating to the health and wellbeing of staff should be lower.		

Action	Carolyn agreed to ensure the original risk register is updated accordingly.	CT	ASAP
11.3	Members asked for an explanation of scale used for the scoring of the residual impact and likelihood criteria; and how often they are expected to review risk, whether it should be annually or at every meeting. Elaine agreed to recirculate the risk register, including the template on which it was based, and to check and report back on the committee's specific responsibilities in terms of risk monitoring.	ES	ASAP
11.4	Seonaid questioned whether staff felt more upbeat now than in the autumn. During the discussion that followed, it was noted that there were a number of factors which meant that staff morale had not improved significantly; the low conversion rate from applications to enrolments; and concerns about what next year's enrolments might look like. Staff are also still dealing with the ongoing impact of the cyber security incident, and with the resultant change in control systems, which means that tasks now take longer.		
11.5	In response to further questions, it was noted that despite recent changes to the guidance, there would no wholesale return to the campus before the summer, because course teams have already planned how the semester 2 curriculum will be delivered. Members indicated a wish to see a return to as much face-to-face support for learning and teaching as is practical. In response, Carolyn indicated that HOCs and Depute HOCs are very much aware of the student experience and of the best of way of delivering learning and teaching but that it may be a discussion for LTQC at their March meeting.		
11.6	Stuart queried whether succession planning, as a mitigation, is solely focused on the curriculum areas, as over reliance on individuals and the loss of key staff were also significant risks on the support side. Carolyn explained that succession planning and risk management happened at a micro level, rather than macro. Teams themselves know who is able to step in, if necessary.		
SG.22.01.13	Date of next meeting		
13.1	The next meeting will be held on 12 May 2022. Seonaid indicated that this would be her last meeting as Chair of the committee as she has, with regret, handed in her resignation to the Board with effect from the end of March 2022. She thanked the members of the committee and Carolyn for their support during her time as Chair.		
	RESERVED ITEMS		
SG.22.01.14	Draft Reserved Minutes of Staff Governance Committee held on 18 November 2021		
14.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	<i>The meeting closed at 11.15am</i>		

