



STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Draft Minutes of Meeting held on
Thursday 12 May 2022
At 09.30 by Teams

Present:

Paul Mitchell (Convenor)	Caroline Webster
Stuart Cruickshank	David Patterson
Hugh Hamilton	

In Attendance:

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

Item		Action	Date
SG.22.02.01	(i) Resignations		
1.1	It was noted that Alistair Fowlie had resigned from the Board with effect from 9 May 2022.		
	(ii) Appointments		
1.2	Following the resignation from the Board of Seonaid Mustard, the former SGC Convenor, Paul Mitchell has agreed to assume the role of Convenor of the Committee, pending the appointment of new non-executive Board members and a review of roles.		
SG.22.02.02	Apologies for Absence		
2.1	There were no apologies for absence.		
SG.22.02.03	Any Additional Declarations of Interest including specific items on this Agenda		
3.1	There were no additional declarations of interest.		
SG.22.02.04	Draft Minutes of Staff Governance Committee meeting held on 27 January 2022		
4.1	The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed: Hugh Hamilton Seconded: Stuart Cruickshank		
SG.22.02.05	Draft Matters Arising of meeting held on 27 January 2022		
5.1	All matters arising were noted as either complete or overtaken, apart from:		
5.2	<u>Action 1.5</u> : It was noted that EO are currently conducting a procurement exercise to replace Admin Control but that the Clerk will look to establish a SharePoint site over the summer for storing Board papers for access by Board members.	ES	Summer 2022
5.3	<u>11.3</u> It was recalled that there had been some confusion at the last meeting around the role of Board committees in		

	reviewing risks in their areas of responsibility and, in this case, that sit with Carolyn as DHROD. It was noted that this issue would be discussed at the next Audit Committee meeting.		
SG.22.02.06	Emerging Issues		
	(i) Teaching Staff Member		
6.1	Following the resignation of Alistair Fowlie, the Clerk had emailed all staff inviting nominations for a Teaching Staff member to fill the vacancy. During discussion, Stuart spoke about his experience as the Support Staff member and suggested that it might be helpful to provide more information, at the nomination stage, on what Board membership entails and what support is available to members.		
6.2	Thereafter, it was agreed that the Clerk should issue more information to staff about what Board membership entails.	ES	Immediate
	(ii) Recruitment of Independent Board Members		
6.2	The Clerk reported that nine applications had been received for the six Independent Board Member vacancies and that the shortlisting panel had decided to put all nine through to the interview stage. The interviews would be held in person on 17 th and 19 th May.		
SG.22.02.07	HR Director's Report		
7.1	Carolyn spoke to her report covering the period 27 January to 28 April 2022 and highlighted the undernoted issues. <u>National Bargaining: Side Table (Lecturing)</u> Industrial action by EIS/FELA is ongoing, with 5 strike days held to date. The union has also moved to Action Short of Strike Action which involves not sharing any assessment or exam results with the College or any other organisation. <u>National Bargaining: Side Table (Support)</u> 70% of those who took part in the UNISON ballot had voted for industrial action but the turn out did not meet the 50% threshold of all voters required before legal action can take place.		
7.2	In response to a question about the level of disruption to students arising from the EIS/FELA action, Carolyn indicated that the numbers participating locally were low and there had been minimum disruption. There was, however, less visibility of the Action Short of Strike Action. She did not anticipate it being a big issue but only time would tell.		

7.3	<u>JCC/JNC Update</u> The minutes of a Joint JCC meeting held on 21 January were circulated. A further meeting scheduled for 26 April had not taken place because it was a planned strike day, but a JCC Support meeting had proceeded on the same day and the minutes will come to the committee's next meeting. A further Joint JCC is scheduled for 26 May but it also falls on a day scheduled for strike action by EIS/FELA .		
7.4	<u>Organisation Culture KPIs 21/22</u> The average sickness absence rate to the end of January 2022 was 3.88%, against a target of 3%. Carolyn provided more detail on the current absences and indicated it would not be surprising if the 3% was not met by the year end. Staff operate in small teams and the long-term sickness of one puts additional pressure on the remaining team. Hugh was of the view that under the current circumstances, the college was doing very well in terms of absence.		
7.5	<u>Operational Plan – 21/22 Organisational Culture Objectives</u> Carolyn highlighted the development of the New Ways of Working (NWOW) Pilot, which will run until the end of June 2022, when line managers will confirm the new working arrangements for their teams. Three main work modes – campus mode, home mode and blended mode – were being piloted with a view to delivering learning, teaching and services in the most efficient and successful way. The pilot was considered at the recent Joint JCC, where ten points were made, which Carolyn was developing a response to.		
7.6	During discussion, the importance of getting the balance right between delivering services and striking the right work/life balance, was highlighted. It was noted that the priority is to create a buzz on campus, particularly for students on site. The importance of monitoring whether productivity will be impacted by staff coming back to work was also raised.		
7.6	<u>Grievances since the last Staff Governance Committee</u> There were no grievances reported.		
7.7	<u>Employee discounts and benefits</u> The contract for the employee benefit and discount scheme is currently under review. Any changes will be communicated to staff by the end of June.		
SG.22.02.08	Culture and Values		
8.1	A progress report on actions undertaken in furtherance of the college strategic aim, was noted. It included details of an online etiquette paper to be issued to all staff to ensure positive behaviours are understood by those who work, study, visit and interact with the college.		
8.2	Hugh suggested an addition to the online etiquette guidance not to send texts while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, which Carolyn agreed.	CT	

8.3	The report included a new form developed as part of the Professional Review and Development (PRD) process for teaching staff that will enable staff, when self-evaluating, to record where they are placed against the four core values.		
8.4	Paul commented that together with the NWO pilot, the online etiquette guidance was timely. He also welcomed the establishment of a new social activity group as a way of trying to ensure that staff get some social time to re-connect with each other.		
SG.22.02.09	Staff Development Activities		
9.1	An update on staff development activities, including a report on the SD day held on 6 January was circulated. Also included was a quantitative annual report for 2021 prepared for the Audit Committee, which was late in being presented due to Brightspace-related issues. Carolyn updated members on information unavailable due to the cyber incident and elements of the report that have progressed significantly since.		
9.2	In response to comments from Hugh, Carolyn indicated that she would look to include a session on how to become research active, as part of the August Development Day. David reported that the annual REF results had been published this week and that 72% of research at UHI was regarded as either 'internationally excellent' or 'world class'. For the first time, a member of staff from the college was part of that recognition. The college needs to build on this and enable more staff to publish papers.		
SG.22.02.10	HR Policies Due for Review		
	Three policies, which had been reviewed by the HR Policy Review Group and considered by SLT, were circulated for ratification.		
	(i) Redundancy Policy and Procedure		
10.1	The Redundancy Procedure had been reviewed to ensure it aligned with the legislation. It has not had to be used for a number of years, other than for the redundancies that arose from the restructure of the Refectory.		
	(ii) Internal Disputes Procedure		
10.2	The Internal Disputes Procedure had not been used for a long time, as most disputes arise at national level. The policy template and terminology had been updated to ensure accuracy and relevance.		
	(iii) Support for Consultation Procedure		
10.3	The Support for Consultation Procedure had been updated to ensure accuracy and relevance. In response to a request from EIS/FELA a change had been included regarding the responsibilities of officials to advise, when requested, of time taken for trade union activities and duties.		
10.4	Following a brief discussion, the committee ratified all three policies.		

SG.22.02.11	Health and Safety Update		
	(i) Draft Minutes of Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on 31 March 2022		
11.1	The draft minutes of the last meeting of the Health and Safety Committee were noted. In the absence of Derek, who would normally provide a verbal report, David advised that issues remained with the HSE monitoring system, including with the checklists, which were not the most user-friendly or appropriate for carrying out checks. The intention was to bring a simplified, streamlined checklist to the next H&S Committee.		
11.2	Paul indicated that he had met recently with Derek and Carolyn to get a more rounded view of H&S activity at the college. It was clear there had been a step change since Brian Dundas had been appointed and that we do not pay enough attention to H&S activity, much of which is positive. It was commendable that the college had not let Covid take the focus away from all the other H&S risks. One area that did require some work, however, was near miss reporting and being more preventative with H&S reporting. David confirmed that this would be looked at; it was intended to make it easier to report incidents.		
11.3	In response to a comment from Caroline, it was agreed that a written H&S update to be provided by Derek for the committee, should include the measures taken to ensure H&S not just on the operational side but also for external contractors working on site.	DD	ASAP
SG.22.02.12	Date of next meeting		
12.1	The next meeting will be held on 3 November 2022.		
	RESERVED ITEMS		
SG.22.02.13	RIDDOR Incident Update		
13.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	<i>The meeting closed at 10.55am</i>		