

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes of Meeting held on
Thursday 27 February 2025 at 13.30pm
in the Boardroom and by MS Teams

Present:

Roddy Burns (Chair)
 Clare Matysova (via MS Teams)
 Sarah Marshall (HISA)

Katy O'Connor
 Stuart Cruickshank
 Grenville Johnston (via MS Teams)

In Attendance:

Carolyn Thomson
 Derek Duncan
 Alex Hastings (Minutes)
 Eleanor Melton (Clerk)

Item		Action	Date
SG.25.01.01	(i) Resignations		
1.1	There were no resignations received.		
	(ii) Appointments		
1.2	Roddy Burns was appointed as Chair of the Committee.		
SG.25.01.02	Apologies for Absence		
2.1	Apologies were received from David Patterson and Chloe Catmore.		
SG.25.01.03	Any Additional Declarations of Interest including specific items on this Agenda		
3.1	There were no additional declarations of interest received.		
SG.25.01.04	Draft Minutes of Staff Governance Committee meeting held on 14 November 2024		
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record: Proposed: Katy O'Connor Seconded: Stuart Cruickshank		
SG.25.01.05	Matters Arising of Staff Governance Committee meeting held on 14 November 2024		
5.1	6.1 – Complete - Terms of Reference on the agenda for consideration.		
5.2	7.1 – Ongoing – Carolyn approached both Trade Unions, with confirmation from Unison that the dispute is closed however, no response has been received from EIS-FELA as of yet.		
5.3	7.2 – Complete – no suggested amendments received.		

5.4	7.3 – Complete – report to be presented at next meeting.		
5.5	8.1 – Ongoing.		
5.6	9.1 – Complete/Ongoing – Tracking carried out via Cintra.		
5.7	10.1 – Complete – roll out to all staff for Staff Development Day.		
SG.25.01.06	HR Director's Report		
6.1	<p>Carolyn supported the paper, firstly by providing an update on the FRP. The staffing FTE figure currently sits at around 192.</p> <p>Some managerial positions left through the VS scheme, which allowed for more savings than first expected. Katy queried if there are any mechanisms in place in the long-term to ensure staff are not affected by the “leanness” of staffing at the College. Carolyn advised that staffing is being looked at for the next session, and that staff wellbeing is considered alongside finding efficiencies from the College Development Day.</p> <p>Carolyn drew attention to SLT vacancies, which has been flagged in the External Auditor's report. A paper has since been provided to the Chair of the Board regarding options going forward. Carolyn stated that there is a key gap in learning and teaching and that the College is missing out on opportunities for growth as a result, adding that SLT believe this should be taken forward. The Deloitte report highlighted concerns regarding our current arrangement for the Finance Director position. The report also highlighted concerns with the structure of the finance department and its approvals process. SLT are proposing an advertisement for a PT Director of Finance. Carolyn advised that this proposal is currently with the Chair of the Board, adding that the EO have advised that they would prefer for the College to have a full-time finance director.</p> <p>Regarding the post of Director of Learning and Teaching, Katy noted, from carrying out research, there is a significant impact to the College not having one in place. Grenville added that this appointment is vital given the opportunities arising currently, such as the MGD MEEIC project.</p> <p>Grenville stated that as we are at a crucial stage of discussions with UHI, these concerns will be raised to the F&GP Committee.</p> <p>The Committee noted SLT's proposal, and asked Carolyn to report back any updates arising from F&GP Committee and SLT.</p>		

	<p>With regards to the job evaluation update, Stuart stated that whilst this is not a surprise, it is disappointing for support staff. Stuart added that there has been a change of goalposts regarding the understandings on job harmonisation – although these were in relation to statements made by previous UNISON reps. He added that although the update is welcomed, the amount of work required dating back to 2018 is a concern. Roddy queried if there were known budget implications because of job evaluation. Carolyn advised that there is not a pot of money, however, it is understood that there is a commitment from the Scottish Government. Carolyn added that the plan remains to backdate from 2018 and that there has been no mention of this not being the case.</p> <p>Clare queried if the Board’s decision to put a hold on the regrading of posts was linked to job evaluation. Carolyn explained that the Board agreed to put a hold on regrading and review at the first meeting of the next session in September 2025, where it is expected that there will be more information available on a national scale.</p> <p>Regarding local employee relations, Roddy asked if there was anything the College could do to encourage EIS-FELA representation. Carolyn advised that EIS-FELA have attended the College to carry out recruitment campaigns, however these have been unsuccessful. El added that the Board will hopefully have Unison representation soon.</p> <p>The Committee noted this update.</p>		
ACTION	Carolyn to report back updates on SLT vacancies at the next SGC meeting.	CT	22-05-25
SG.25.01.07	Cultures and Values Update		
7.1	<p>Carolyn provided an insight into the College Development Day and advised that CMT are currently looking at ‘quick wins’ arising from staff suggestions. Other suggestions ranked at level 2 will be investigated at the follow up session scheduled for the end of March. Carolyn highlighted the positive feedback from staff regarding the day.</p> <p>Despite the College Development Day being positive, the Committee was reminded of the workload pressures staff are facing. Stuart advised that although morale may seem high, a lot of the same issues exist, and staff are eager to see change. Katy</p>		

	<p>sought assurance that the College is looking at the reduction of staffing and the impact this will have on them and students.</p> <p>Additionally, Katy highlighted staff development opportunities as an issue if there is no cover to allow for this. Carolyn stated that we have aligned the deployment of teaching staff with the delivery of courses, with the supply bank being used where necessary. Carolyn added that this is more challenging with support staff, as there is limited scope to try and reduce workload. The College will be able to gain a further understanding of the impact on staff from the upcoming EREP and surveys.</p> <p>Clare stated that Carolyn's paper was very positive to read. Highlighting internal communications plans, Clare emphasised that there is a lot of discussion in the sector regarding how to make hybrid working effective. Carolyn advised that the feedback from managers has been that it would be more helpful to have a structure to follow for applications for home or hybrid working. Stuart added that one of the themes of the development day was regarding working practices. Flexible working is now being explored by CMT and hopefully something coherent will be developed for this.</p> <p>Clare asked when the staff survey, agreed at the last SGC meeting, would take place. Carolyn advised that this would take place towards the end of the year in order to allow the new structure to bed in.</p> <p>The Committee noted this update.</p>		
SG.24.03.08	Staff Development Activities		
8.1	Carolyn supported the paper. The Committee noted this update.		
SG.25.01.09	HR Policies Due for Review		
9.1	<p>Carolyn supported the paper, Stuart pointed out that UHI are looking for a tertiary agreement with general policies and asked if this was the same for HR policies. Carolyn explained that this has been attempted but each area is so different. The PRD process, for example, is the UHI approach, therefore support is shared and provided where applicable.</p> <p>Clare pointed out that there are issues accessing the equality impact assessments online, as the links do not work, adding that this is important in terms of</p>		

	highlighting issues. Carolyn agreed to investigate the issues.		
ACTION	Carolyn to investigate issues with accessing equality impact assessments on UHI Moray website.	CT	ASAP
SG.25.01.10	Health and Safety Update		
	(i) Minutes of Health and Safety Meeting held on 18 December 2024		
10.1	<p>Derek supported the paper, highlighting that there were no major incidents to report, however, it is positive to see an increase in Near Miss reporting.</p> <p>The work of the Site Assistants during recent severe weather periods and short staffing to keep the building open was noted and thanked by the Committee.</p>		
SG.25.01.11	Target Operating Model Update - Verbal		
11.1	<p>Carolyn provided an update in David's absence. The project is moving into the engagement phase, with staff engagement scheduled for the week commencing 10th of March. This will consist of a presentation delivered by the principal and a member of UHI Executive Office. Following this, there will be drop-in sessions held by the UHI transformation team. Carolyn advised that the transformation team will also be engaging with Trade Unions. The Trade Unions have expressed their unhappiness with not being involved in discussions sooner.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the update on pathfinder projects. Carolyn stated that it is difficult to know where these projects could take us without knowing what direction we are going to be taking. Grenville added that there is a vast amount of pathfinder projects reported, however, no knowledge of what any of them are. Grenville stated that it would be useful to know what other Boards across the partnership are thinking and queried when UHI plan to get all Boards together.</p> <p>Roddy highlighted that the main concern at first was the lack of engagement, although assurance has been given that this will improve.</p> <p>Carolyn added that this is a key contributing factor when considering staff morale, there are vast amounts of questions with no answers as of yet, which will frustrate people.</p> <p>The Committee noted this update.</p>		

SG.25.01.12	Emerging Issues		
	(i) Terms of Reference		
12.1	The Committee agreed to approve the Terms of Reference provided. These will be taken to the Board for final approval.		
	(ii) IT General Controls Audit Report		
12.2	The report was noted by the Committee. Derek announced that the College was awarded Cyber Essentials Plus Certification this morning.		
SG.25.01.13	Date of Next Meeting – 22 May 2025		
	<i>Meeting closed at 15.30pm</i>		