

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

### Minutes of the Meeting of Monday 16 March 2009 at 5.30 pm in the Board Room

<b>Present</b>	Mrs Elizabeth McAtear (Chairman)	Mr John Huson
	Mr Kenneth Kennedy (Vice-Chairman)	Mr Graham Morrison
	Mr David R Green (Principal)	Mr Donald Macdonald
	Mr Donald Martin	Mr George Whyte
	Mr Andrew Mackenzie	Mr David Somerville

**By Invitation** Mr David Matheson, Professor Robert Cormack - Principal, UHI

The Chairman welcomed Mr Graham Morrison to his first meeting as a member of the Board. She hoped he would find his time on the Board enjoyable and useful, and was sure that he would make a valuable contribution to its work, as a result of his background and experience in education.

Mrs McAtear also extended a special welcome to UHI Principal, Professor Robert Cormack, who had joined the meeting to give a brief presentation, which would be followed by a question and answer session.

#### Action

#### 1 Apologies

Mr Donald Nicholson, Mrs Catherine McDiarmid, Mrs Deanne Gilbert, Mr Brian Chaplin, Mr Iain Macmillan.

#### 2 Minutes of Meeting of Monday 2 February 2009

These were approved.

#### 3 Matters Arising

**3 OFTTI Project** - No report was available as there had as yet been no decision from CnES giving any more information. There was an assumption that LCC would not be responsible for the project after 31 March 2009, but also an assumption that the College would not abandon the project after that date. CnES had appointed an Employability Officer and a start was being made to consider courses which would be suitable for clients of the project. The Support Staff representative, who was also Acting Manager of the OFTTI project at the College, expressed an interest in the matter being discussed. He informed members that meetings were due to take place the following week with OFTTI service users and staff at locations in Stornoway, Uist and Barra. The Board would be kept informed of developments.

DRG

**5 Strategic Dialogue Meeting** - See Agenda Item 8.

**9 The Bridge Centre** - A review of management at the Centre was being undertaken by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services, at the request of the Bridge Company Board. Despite the fact that the College had no actual responsibility for the Centre there was a strong feeling in some quarters that LCC should take a more direct role in its running,

Action

in view of the duty of care it owed to the students living there. Once the review had been completed a recommendation might be brought to the Board of Management with regard to its future governance. Asked if the Centre should be included on the Risk Register, the Principal replied that this would not be appropriate in current circumstances.

DRG

**11 OHCPP - Town Hall** - The possibility of the College having a presence in the refurbished Town Hall had been raised informally with the appropriate authorities.

**4 Finance & General Purposes Committee Chairmanship** - The Board had approved the appointment of Mr Kenneth Kennedy as Chairman.

**Watt Report** - A response had been sent to the consultants and SFC on this report.

**Committee Membership** - Mrs Catherine McDiarmid had indicated that she was not a member of the Audit Committee. No further amendments had been received.

**5 Principal's Report (v) UHI Academic Partners** - The network college Principals would work closely together on FE college issues.

DRG

**(vi) Outer Hebrides Migration Study Group** - The summary report and action plan of this study had been circulated. Hard copies of the full report could be made available to members on request.

**6 Annual Report 2007-08** - The format of the 2008-09 Report would be discussed at the Strategic Planning Meeting on 25 March 2009.

ALL

**8 Student Recruitment Update** - See Agenda Item 6.

**9 UHI Matters** - The UHI Planning Group had met to discuss arrangements for the selection of a new Principal and Chairman.

**10 Quality Assurance Baseline Report** - This had been discussed by the new Quality, Learning & Teaching Committee at its first meeting.

**18 College Calendar 2009-10** - A final decision by the SMT on details of the calendar was awaited.

#### 4 Reports from Committee Meetings

**(i) Joint Finance/Audit Committee 1 December 2008** - The Minutes were noted

**(ii) Audit Committee, Monday 9 March 2009** - In an oral report, which was given by the Principal in the absence of the Chairman of the Committee, members were informed that the Internal Audit Plan for 2009 had been closely examined. It was clear that there would be considerable pressure on the internal auditor to meet the timescale, but it was agreed that this should be achieved. The report on the Internal Auditor's visit to Benbecula and Barra was also discussed at the meeting. The Risk Register would be examined again at the Strategic Planning Day on 25 March.

**(iii) Finance & General Purposes Committee Monday 26 January** - The Minutes were noted.

**(iv) Finance & General Purposes Committee, Monday 9 March 2009** - In his oral report the Chairman of the Committee, Mr Kenneth Kennedy, informed members that a response to the Valuation of Property report had been sent to the consultants and to SFC by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services.

The Management Accounts to 31 January 2009 had been considered and the variations shown were largely due to timing issues. These were expected to stabilise in the course of the year, with any significant variations being followed up by the Committee. Savings were being made in energy costs as a result of the upgraded building management system. A mid-year budget review would be undertaken once outstanding information, particular with regard to HE student income, had been received. Energy performance certificates had been received for all areas of the Stornoway Campus, and LCC had agreed to participate in a Carbon Management Project dealing with the use of energy and recycling issues as they affected the College's carbon footprint. Knowledge Transfer income totalling £64, 640 had now been received since September 2008.

**(v) Quality, Learning & Teaching Committee 18 February 2009** - In the absence of the Chairman of this Committee, Mrs Catherine McDiarmid, the Principal gave an oral report on the meeting. The Committee consisted of 4 board members including the Principal and the Student Representative. Its remit had been based on ASC guidance, with slight variations, in particular the decision to have a lay member of the Board as chairman, rather than the Principal. The Committee's remit would include quality assurance, improvement and enhancement, and its relationship with the Academic Board had been agreed. The Quality Assurance Baseline Report had been examined in detail, and the Principal and the Head of Quality Improvement would produce an Action Plan based on the Report, for the next meeting of the Committee. This report would also go to the Academic Board and the Quality Assurance Committee. Agreement had been made on how to structure future meetings, with links to be established with College sections by means of presentations from Heads of Section to the Committee. The work of Training for Development would also be routinely monitored by the Committee.

DRG

## 5 Principal's Report

The following items were included in this report, a copy of which is attached:

**(i) A new post, Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering** was being advertised to develop this area of the College's business which would link with the new BSc in Engineering: Renewable Energy.

**(ii) A meeting of the Harris Tweed Industry Liaison Group** took place on 6 March attended by Mr Donald Martin, Board member, as Chairman of the Harris Tweed Authority and the Principal as OHCPP member representing the College. Among the items considered had been a move to have a more strategic business plan for the group. A proposal for an ESF supported training and skills development programme had been discussed. The College was likely to become more involved as plans for the training programme developed. The College foyer would be the venue for a meeting of the Weaver's Association on 20 April 2009.

**(iii) Greenspace Research** - Discussions were taking place with a major potential customer. The meeting had been attended by Mr Ken Kennedy, representing the Board, and had proved very positive. Interviews were currently taking place for the remaining research studentships.

**(iv) UHI Annual Lecture** - This would take place in An Lanntair on 30 September, with Brenda Gourlay, outgoing Vice Chancellor of the Open University, as guest speaker.

**(v) Archaeology Research** - UHI Professor in Archaeology, Professor Chris Morris, had visited the College on 27 February to discuss LCC's developing role. Rachel Barrowman would attract funding through the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise and this would build on work planned with two honorary Research Fellows, Mary Macleod and Chris Barrowman.

(vi) **Bayhead Bridge Centre** - As indicated above, a report had been commissioned from the College's Director of Finance and Corporate Services on management and governance in relation to security at the Centre. It seemed likely that the College would need to play a larger role in future in relation to the Bridge Centre.

(vii) **Scottish College Principals' Convention** - This had taken place earlier on 16 March and had been attended by Mr Mark Batho, the new Chief Executive of SFC and two of his Council colleagues. Early warning had been given of the reduced level of funding available for 2009-10 with even more constraints for the following year. Concern had also been expressed at the lost of apprenticeships, 730 to date, of which 90% were in the construction industry, and schemes to find jobs for those affected were being initiated.

## 6 Recruitment Update

The papers circulated before the meeting showed that FE student numbers for 2008-09 were likely to exceed the target by 2%. A shortfall had been identified in HE numbers, however, most significantly in Humanities (Creative Arts & Hospitality) and Gaelic, where there was a contrasting increase in FE activity due to the popularity of Ulpan courses. Growth areas included Engineering and Computing. It was suggested that recruitment might be improved by encouraging school pupils to undertake a two year course in the Science (Rural Development) Category at LCC to be followed by a final degree year on the mainland. Asked by the Student Representative if the introduction of Ulpan courses had led to any changes being made in the method of marketing Gaelic at HE level, the Director of Academic Affairs replied that new markets were constantly being sought to attract students, including summer schools, and there was a possibility that joint Honours courses including Gaelic might be offered. The postgraduate recruitment figures shown related to taught postgraduate courses only, (Greenspace research students therefore were excluded), and showed a surplus of 3.9 FTE above target. Overall enrolments at HE level were 93.7% of target, and recruitment was still continuing.

## 7 Investors in People (IiP)

No further information had been received. A report would be prepared for the next meeting.

DRG

## 8 SFC Strategic Dialogue Meeting, November 2008

The final report from SFC on this meeting was noted. It was felt that the visitors would have benefitted from spending time in finding out more details of the College's activities, and these concerns had been relayed to SFC.

## 9 Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership

A considerable amount of work had been carried out in a very short period of time in order to produce the OHCPP's Single Outcome Agreement, which contained 7 local outcomes, compared with the 15 national outcomes. The 7 outcomes were noted.

*[Mr George Whyte left the meeting at 6.20 pm.]*

The exercise had highlighted the need for the College to plan well ahead for the future to ensure that the topics it wished to be included were taken into account. This would be emphasised at the Strategic Planning event on 25 March. The College would also need to be alert to the possibility that the 7 local outcomes might be changed from year to year, causing possible problems for LCC. However, it had become clear in the discussions which had taken place at the SFC Planning Day, that LCC was significantly in advance of other colleges in terms of its OHCPP relationship.

## 10 UHI Matters

### (i) UHI Business Transformation Programme

The paper was noted. The Principal explained that the process would be taken forward across the UHI network and all Boards of Management must make a commitment to the seven priority areas, essential for accessibility to funding.

### (ii) Process for Appointing New Chairman and Principal

This was a two-stage process - first the Chairman would be appointed and then the new Principal. Professor Cormack pointed out that this sequence had been chosen in order to enable the new Chairman to chair the selection panel for the new Principal.

### (iii) Presentation by Professor Robert Cormack, Principal of UHI

Professor Cormack began with a brief summary of the historical background to the establishment of UHI in its present form, tracing developments from early Scottish history through the choice between Inverness and Stirling for a new Scottish university, the conversion to university status of former polytechnics such as Robert Gordon's and Abertay, and then the commissioning of Sir Graham Hills to formulate a proposal for a University of the Highlands. His conclusion that this should be based on the existing College structure was accepted and its development was facilitated by the grant of £100m of Millennium Commission, HIE and EU funding for buildings and computer network. UHI's mission statement still reflected its 'grounding in the community' as a network of 13 partners of varying sizes - FE colleges and specialist colleges and research institutes - whose Chairs all had a place on the Board of Governors, 50% at any time with voting rights. Partner Principals had places on the Executive Board and all partners were autonomous, many of them involved in business activities which were not part of UHI. After overcoming considerable difficulty in 2000, HEI status was achieved under the direction of Alistair MacFarlane with consequent SFC funding. From 2001, with Professor Cormack as Principal, UHI had moved forward to its current position with taught degree awarding powers and on the verge of achieving university title. A possible short cut offered to university title had been rejected, as it would have required the omission of research degree awarding powers, and to avoid prolonged delay valuable links had been created with the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Strathclyde, which were helping UHI to build up its research capacity. Its challenges now included the need to raise the level of skills in the local economy, particularly important in a time of recession, and to increase research activity to underpin the local economy, maximising the value of its cultural and geographical assets, including archaeology, Viking and Gaelic history and culture, and encouraging an entrepreneurial environment. SFC's Draft Corporate Plan contained positive aspects, particularly in relation to regional provision. Professor Cormack's aim before his retirement would be to work towards convincing government funding bodies of the need for regional equity to bring UHI's funding levels, currently £30m per year, closer to those of universities with similar regional commitments, who received more than 10 times that level of funding annually.

The Chairman thanked Professor Cormack for his presentation and he then answered questions from Board members. These included the following:

Q How likely is it that the suggested equalisation will take place? Suddenly or gradually?

A SFC funding models will change, but any moves toward equalisation will be gradual.

Q Will pressure be applied to partners to rationalise?

A 2010 will be a difficult year in funding terms. The Networking project will increase cost effectiveness. Business services will also have to be networked - there will be no choice. Amalgamation of colleges is unlikely as each serves the specific needs of

its own community. A stronger centre will be needed to drive the project forward, but services can be distributed.

- Q What effect do successive governments have on UHI?
- A The Labour Government looked after us well. Jack McConnell was from an island community and so understood them. He spoke at the Convention of the Highlands and Islands and we are now benefitting from a sense of inclusivity under the current government.
  
- Q Will the position of FE staff delivering HE courses be sustainable post achievement of university title - many different salary scales and conditions?
- A There are also huge differences in universities, with variations of salaries and conditions in the same university.
  
- Q Is there enough inter-fertilisation between network partners at all levels? Is that a challenge? Very few UHI partner Board members seem to attend SFEU/ASC governance meetings.
- A Better understanding is gained through visits to partners by staff in Executive Office. Central events/meetings are expensive but important for exchanging information and networking. It's up to each college to take advantage of these opportunities.
  
- Q There must have been confidence in 1992 that there were enough students in the area to justify a university. Is that still the case?
- A One third of students are 'fees only'. It's up to the partners to collect the fees. SFC should fund these. We need to grow and argue for funded growth. Top up fees for Scottish universities are essential. Personal funding will provide an opportunity for UHI to attract students staying at home. However, the demand from 18 year olds is for courses such as Law and Psychology - we need to broaden our curriculum offer.

Professor Cormack added that Staff Development and Student Records would be used for planning purposes. UHI had students entering 13 different partners not on direct degrees, but often via the HNC/HND route, with colleges using a variety of different modes of collecting information. The Data Improvement Project would help to standardise this process. It was the smaller colleges such as LCC which were driving UHI forward. LCC offered courses at 12 SQA levels, the bigger colleges were less good at research. LCC should take credit for what it had achieved.

Mrs McAtear thanked Professor Cormack for his presentation, which had ended on a very positive note. The Principal added that SFC's Corporate Plan was included in the papers for the Strategic Planning Event.

- 11 **A O C B** **Action**
- (i) Register of Interests - Update**
- The need to update this document as required was noted.
  
- 12 **Date of Next Meeting - Strategic Planning Event - Wednesday 25 March 2009**
- Members would meet for lunch in the Training Restaurant between 12.15 pm and 12.30 pm. **ALL**
- The Strategic Planning Event would follow in the Bridge Centre.

**Date of Next Board Meeting - Monday 11 May 2009** **ALL**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.35 pm.

Chairman .....*Elizabeth McAtear*.....

Date .....*11/05/2009*.....

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF MONDAY 16 MARCH 2009**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Matters Arising -</b> <b>3 OFTTI Project</b> - Members would be kept informed of developments.	<b>DRG</b>
	<b>9 The Bridge Centre</b> - Possibility of recommendation being brought to the Board following the review of management and governance at the Bridge Centre.	<b>[IMcM]</b>
	<b>5 Principal's Report (v) UHI Academic Partners</b> - Network Principals to work closely together on FE college issues	<b>DRG</b>
	<b>6 Annual Report 2007-08</b> - Format of 2009-10 Annual Report to be discussed at Strategic Planning Event	<b>ALL</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Reports from Committee Meetings</b> <b>(v) Quality, Learning &amp; Teaching Committee 18 February 2009</b> Action Plan based on QA Baseline Report to be prepared for the next meeting of the Committee	<b>DRG</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting - Strategic Planning Event - Wednesday 25 March 2009.</b> Members to meet at the College at 12.15 pm for lunch.	<b>ALL</b>
	<b>Date of Next Board of Management Meeting - Monday 11 May 2009</b>	<b>ALL</b>