MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2018

Present: Professor P Hannaford (Convenor), Mrs C Inglis, Mrs E Argo, Ms C Cook (Clerk), Mrs D Dyker, Professor R Wells, Mrs T White, Dr H Martin, Mr B Paterson, Professor M Campbell, Mr K Sadler, Professor D Anderson, Mrs L Robertson (observer),

Apologies: Professor P McGeorge, Mr O Cox, Dr F Pedersen,

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2018
1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2018 were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING
2.1 Joint Consultative Committee on Redundancy Avoidance (JCCRA) Review
2.1.1 Mrs White updated the committee on the JCCRA Review and advised that proposed amendments would go to Policy Review Group in early January for approval.

2.2 Lecture Capture
2.2.1 The committee was provided with an update.

2.3 PAM Assist
2.3.1 Dr Martin suggested that under the Health and Safety Act, TU Safety Reps should be consulted about the appointment of competent people to assist with Health & Safety and that well-being and mental health (counselling services) came under this. Mrs Dyker confirmed, that as this was part of the overall procurement for an employee benefits scheme, the health and safety reps would not require to be involved.

2.4 Staff survey
2.4.1 There would be staff sessions in the New Year. UCU requested information based on staff category and area and it was agreed this would be considered.

2.5 UASLAS
2.5.1 Mr Paterson advised the committee that a communication would be issued to staff and there would be a slight change in what had been agreed regarding retirement age.

2.6 Car Parking
2.6.1 Mr Paterson said he noted the significant cost to resurface the Bedford Road carpark, however the carpark resurfacing that had taken place in other areas had been commented on negatively by some members of staff. An additional communication has been sent by the University Secretary following the meeting.

2.7 Security Staff and School of Engineering
2.7.1 Mr Paterson updated the committee about the papers that had been taken ‘offline’ at the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee (PNCC) meeting in September. The discussions around the papers was ongoing and work continued to find solutions.
2.8 EU Settlement Costs

2.8.1 Dr Martin asked for it to be noted that the unions wished to thank the University for repaying EU settlement costs for staff.

Dr Adam Price, Universities and College Union, (UCU) joined the meeting for the agenda item on Workload.

3. WORKLOAD

3.1 The Committee received a paper from Universities and College Union (UCU) on workload which had been written subsequent to the Joint Negotiating Consultative Committee (JNCC) held in September 2018. The paper requested the setup of a Workload Governance Group. Following discussion, the Committee agreed the formation of a Workload Review Group comprising members from all the unions and the management team.

3.2 It was agreed the unions would identify 5 Trade Union representatives and management would identify 5 representatives. Dr Price requested that someone with a senior role on the Health and Safety committee would also participate in this group and this was agreed.

3.3. The following was agreed:

a) change title to Workload Review Group
b) slightly modify draft remit item 6, and ensure at least one management representative has linkage to the Health and Safety Committee.

c) the group would be set up for a year
d) provide an interim statement to the PNCC after 6 months.
e) workload would be a standing item at PNCC.
f) Mrs Dyker to confirm clerk from HR team who would arrange the first meeting.

ACTION: Workload Review Group to be set up - HR

Dr Price left the meeting.

4. CAPABILITY FIGURES

4.1 The committee noted a report on the numbers of staff currently being supported through the Capability Procedure (both informal and formal).

4.2 Mr Paterson advised the committee that the Policy Review Group were currently reviewing the Capability Procedure and further information would follow in due course.

5. DIGNITY AT WORK

5.1 The Committee received a joint paper from Unite and Unison on Dignity at Work. Mr Paterson commented that this could also be referred to as dignity in the community.

5.2 Mrs Dyker said she had had a helpful discussion on this with Mr Cox and Mr Paterson. Mr Paterson commented that policies often focused on how to address negative issues and that they would like an umbrella statement or policy on how to operate more positively.

5.3 It was noted that there was a wish expressed by all unions, to continue working in partnership to enable a University wide strategy to promote dignity in the community, and potentially develop a positive overarching statement.

6. PROMOTIONS REVIEW

6.1 Mrs White advised the committee that the paper had been provided for information as approval had been done through PRG, as the original PNCC date had been postponed. The Committee noted the amendments to the Promotions Process which would commence in December 2018 and that briefings were arranged for both campuses.
6.2 There was discussion around promotion success rates in different areas, predominately among Academic Related and Support staff, and whether this required further investigation.

6.3 There was also discussion around the percentage of staff that don’t apply for promotion, and whether a check should be done to see who was applying and whether there was a gender imbalance.

6.4 There was also a request for Trade Unions to be involved in open sessions and a request that open sessions should commence in June for following year, so that people could start writing their applications earlier. It was noted that applications could be made throughout the year for those applying for promotion up to grade 6. Mrs Dyker advised that HR normally waited for the changes to the process to be agreed before they were communicated.

6.5 Dr Martin asked if the Trades Unions could be observers on the staff and sub committees as she felt this would help with co-running a session in June. It was agreed to discuss this early in the New Year.

ACTION: Further discussion to take place regarding possible union involvement in the promotion committees HR

6.6 Review of Administration Support

6.6.1 Professor Hannaford advised the committee that the University was about to commission a review of administration support within schools. Individuals in these posts could still apply for promotion, however their applications would not be considered until the review was completed. Any successful application could then be backdated, so that those individuals were not disadvantaged.

6.6.2 There was discussion around whether there would be some form of recompense for those who would have been promoted but were not as a result of the review.

6.6.3 The review would take place in January/February, with a report expected by end February.

7. UPDATE ON REF 2021

7.1 The committee noted the paper on REF 2021. Professor Campbell advised the committee that the paper outlined the work on REF2021 that had taken place over the past year. The final guidance was due out in January and a draft code of practice for the institution would be developed and consulted through Senate, PNCC, UMG, and the Research Policy Committee as appropriate, to ensure it was fit for purpose.

7.2 Professor Campbell commented that there was also a need to ensure staff with individual circumstances could be accommodated or not, as the staff may wish.

7.3 There was a request for reasonable deadlines as staff sometimes felt there was very short notice to provide information but then it took a long time to get feedback. Professor Campbell noted that much of the delay was because submissions were sent out externally for benchmarking.

8. GENDER NEUTRAL ISSUES

8.1 The Committee received an update from Mrs Dyker on gender neutral issues and the work being undertaken with AUSA to introduce gender neutral signage, some gender neutral toilets and address other gender neutral priorities.

9. POLICIES

9.1 The committee approved the changes to the Work Related Stress Policy.

9.2 The committee approved the changes to the Recruitment and Selection Policy in relation to the University Gaelic Plan.
9.3 There was a brief discussion around the Data Protection and Information Security Policies which would be on the agenda for a future PNCC.

10. AOB

10.1 Policy Review Group

10.1.1 Mr Paterson advised the committee that PRG had noticed a few problems with scheduling of policy approval by senior management and there were frequently policies from other areas that were requested to be reviewed urgently. Recently this had been happening at every meeting and knocking the planned review schedule out. Mr Paterson proposed that there should be a time deadline before PNCC to have a policy reviewed by PRG and if this deadline was not met, then the policy would have to go to the following PNCC meeting for approval.

10.1.2 Mrs Inglis clarified that SMT had no policy responsibilities, however where a policy like Data Protection required to have staffing issues approved it would go through PRG. However PRG was an informal group, it worked very well, but was not part of the governance structure.

10.1.3 Mr Paterson clarified that PRG was originally set up for policies relating to terms and conditions.

10.2 Professional Services

10.2.1 There was discussion around the use of the term ‘Professional Services’, and that there was confusion across institution about exactly which staff were included in this group. Mr Paterson suggested that the nomenclature required review.

10.2.2 Professor Hannaford agreed that would be helpful and was happy to receive alternative suggestions and he was sure Professor Boyne would be too. Professional Services were equally as important as academics.

ACTION: Alternative suggestions for ‘Professional Services’ to be forwarded to Professor Hannaford for consideration.

10.3 Training

10.3.1 Dr Martin enquired about the Conflict Resolution training and Data Protection training for Line managers and other appropriate staff.

10.3.2 Mr Paterson said that it was an excellent course and over 100 staff including all security staff had completed the training. Mr Sadler confirmed that the Info Hub front facing staff had also completed this.

11. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 6 February 2018.