UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2014

Present: Professor S D Logan (Convenor), Mr B Paterson, Mrs P Burnett, Mrs D Dyker, Dr A Fenwick (Deputising for Dr Shanks), Professor M Greaves, Professor B MacGregor, Professor P McGeorge, Ms F Stewart, Mrs T White, Mrs P Williams, and Mrs F Smith (Clerk)

Apologies: Mrs E Argo, Mrs C Inglis, Professor M Ross, Dr R Shanks,

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2014

Item 2.1 was amended to read “The option of opting out will be removed at this stage of the pilot so that full feedback can be gathered, although this was not with full agreement from the Unions.”

Item 2.2 was amended to read “Discussions had also taken place with the UCU Scotland President, David Anderson regarding this issue.”

Item 3, paragraph 2, the sentence “Whilst those who transferred into the USS scheme from the UASLAS scheme at the time of the Framework Agreement did so on a detriment basis.” was removed as it was incorrect.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2014 were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Review of IAMS Pilot Scheme

The Committee was advised that 3 additional areas had been identified to participate in the extended IAMS pilot scheme, School of Engineering, School of Education and the CASS College Office. HR Partners were working with the Heads of these areas to ensure that the staff in their areas were fully aware of the pilot and the purpose of it.

ACTION: HR

2.2 Smoking Policy

The Committee reviewed the updated draft Smoking Policy and was advised that Estates were currently working to identify a small number of designated smoking areas on the Old Aberdeen campus.

Question was raised around whether smoking areas were to be designated on the Foresterhill campus for members of the public. Clarity will be sought on this issue and reported at the next meeting. Concerns were raised about issues which may arise from this policy change in respect of the length of smoking breaks required to allow staff to go to a smoking shelter and the resultant impact on colleagues who do not smoke.

It was noted that further information on the location of the shelters would be brought to the next meeting. It was requested that the placement of the shelters be carefully considered.

ACTION: HR/Estates
3. **USS CONSULTATION**

The Committee noted the oral update provided regarding the proposed suspension of industrial action by UCU. It was noted that confirmation of this suspension was hoped to be received on 19 November 2014. Should the suspension be confirmed it would cover the period 20 November 2014 to 15 January 2015. Mrs Dyker advised the Committee that UCU had submitted alternative proposals for changes to the USS scheme and that the University had been asked to comment on the technical assumptions for the valuation of the scheme.

UCU advised the Committee that they had consulted locally with their members and had provided feedback to the UCU Scotland President, David Anderson, on the views of their members in this regard. Their HE Committee was due to meet that afternoon.

The Convenor wished to formally acknowledge the excellent working relationship which had been demonstrated between local UCU representatives and the University on this issue. This constructive communication had ensured that there had been minimal impact upon students. UCU echoed this and highlighted how helpful it had been to meet with Management on this issue to find out the commonality of opinion between both groups.

Concerns were raised by the other Unions regarding the lack of engagement of USS and the University with them on this issue. It was felt that the non-UCU members’ views had not been heard. The Convenor apologised on behalf of the University for this but acknowledged that he could not speak for USS on this matter. It was highlighted that all USS eligible members would be consulted with fully on this matter as part of the formal statutory consultation. The University would submit feedback through this consultation process to USS on behalf of all members.

The unions were also advised that, in the absence of an alternative mechanism being available from USS, they could feedback to USS via the University.

4. **REVIEW OF PROBATION**

The Committee noted the report on the Review of the Probation which had been undertaken and noted the suggested lengths of probation for all staff.

The Convenor commended the working group for producing a good piece of work to date and noted that a further update on this review would be received at the next meeting.

5. **PROMOTION EXERCISE 2014-15**

The Committee noted the work which had been undertaken by the Promotion Review group in developing Academic Related role descriptors. It was acknowledged that whilst the role descriptors were viewed positively the testing exercise undertaken had not provided sufficient comfort to allow the introduction of a new promotion process. It was agreed that for this year’s promotion exercise the HERA analysis of Academic Related applications would continue with the role descriptors running in parallel. Staff would be asked to complete both sets of paperwork on a voluntary basis with HR Partners helping to facilitate this process.

**ACTION: HR**
6. INTERNATIONALISATION POLICY

The Committee noted the draft policy which had been presented as a framework to support staff working on overseas assignments. In general the policy was received positively and it was agreed that any specific feedback should be provided directly to the Clerk. The Clerk undertook to meet with the UCU representatives to hear their suggestions.

It was acknowledged that the entitlement for family visits for short-term assignments should be reviewed.

ACTION: Clerk

7. ONESOURCE PAYMENTS

The Committee acknowledged that the payments to be made to staff who had been involved directly with the introduction of OneSource had been confirmed. It was noted that individual staff would be written to this month to notify them of the payment they were to receive.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 UCU members raised concerns about the lack of suitable facilities for staff to socialise in an environment away from students. The Committee acknowledged the continuing concern in this regard and that social space for staff on campus was an issue. It was hoped that this issue would be captured in the new strategic plan.

UCU also raised two concerns regarding the Crombie Hall. The first around its listed status and the work which had been alleged to have been undertaken without appropriate building consent. The second issue related to students having to walk between Crombie Hall and the Hub to have their meals particularly in times of poor weather.

The Convenor undertook to discuss the issue of building consent with the Estates Section as he did not have information on this issue.

The University’s commitment to ensuring the safety of staff and students was reiterated in particular in relation to ensuring that roads and paths were always cleared in periods of snow. The Convenor would clarify with the Head of Campus Services if there was an alternative option available but felt that the impact of this issue on the overall Student Experience was minimal.

ACTION: Convenor/Clerk

8.2 Mrs Dyker noted that this meeting was Professor Logan’s final meeting and formally thanked him for his Convenorship of PNCC this session.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee will be Thursday 26 February 2015 at 10am.