UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2016

Present:  Dr R Shanks (Convenor), Professor J Kilburn, Mrs D Dyker, Professor McGeorge, Mr B Paterson, Dr A MacKillop, Professor P Hannaford, Mr M McConnell, Mrs P Burnett, Mrs V Buchan, Mrs E Argo, Professor M Ross, Mr M McConnell, Mrs T White, C Cook (Clerk)
Mr A Donaldson, Ms A Powell, Mr P Lamb, (Police Scotland Prevent Delivery Unit)

Apologies:  Mrs C Inglis, Mrs V Buchan, Professor B MacGregor,

1. PRESENTATION ON THE PREVENT (COUNTER TERRORISM) DUTY

Mr Donaldson gave a presentation on the Prevent (Counter-Terrorism) Duty. This was a brief overview of what the Counter-Terrorism legislation means to the University and what is being done in response to the Guidance approved last year. The Committee discussed the implementation process and specifically the matter in relation to external speakers on campus. There was also a Safeguarding panel, the main purpose of which was to support staff and students and facilitate Freedom of speech. There was discussion about maintaining freedom of speech, not acting in a discriminatory way and ensuring the awareness of equality and diversity issues. Appropriate training would be rolled out.

2. CAR PARKING

The Committee noted the response to the queries raised. There was discussion about the policing of car parking. There was concern expressed that staff whose job it was to check the car park felt less trusted if senior managers were also checking. Mr Donaldson said there had been a particular concern raised in relation to potential abuse of the car parking policy hence why senior managers had checked parking permits in a specific car park. That had now been resolved and the matter closed.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2016

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2016 were approved.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Living Wage

Dr MacKillop advised the Committee that there was a potential concern in relation to staff engaged under temporary services, specifically that the hourly rate may not meet the living wage, if preparation time is included. Dr MacKillop advised that he is awaiting further information from his members on this matter. Mrs Dyker indicated that this concern may be resolved through the work being undertaken in relation to workload modelling. This work may assist in a definition around marking and preparation time for temporary services.

ACTION: UCU

4.2 Protocol for Contract Termination

A new honorary status letter incorporating a waiver clause had been confirmed and was in use. It was agreed a copy should be circulated PNCC.

ACTION: HR
5. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REVIEW

Mrs Dyker advised that a meeting was scheduled for 20 May with the Campus Trade Unions to consult on the final recommendations from the review. Mr Paterson indicated that there may be concerns from individuals where they understood their job no longer existed and that they had to start applying for other jobs. Mr Paterson asked if these individuals were at risk from compulsory redundancy. Mrs Dyker said that there were 10 to 15 people displaced as a consequence of the review and Mrs Inglis and Professor Haites had commenced individual conversations with those staff directly affected. The Committee noted that individuals would complete a skills matrix with a view to matching them to current/future vacancies. Dr MacKillop asked about ‘red circling’ for redeployees. Mrs Dyker confirmed that the current ‘red circling’ policy of 3 years protection would continue.

6. 9 DAY FORTNIGHT UPDATE

Mrs Dyker advised that there had been variable engagement with the pilot scheme, as some people already had flexible or family friendly working arrangements. The feedback from the trial was generally positive and that, for those participating, the scheme supported a work life balance. It was recommended that the scheme be rolled out as an additional option for flexible working. Mr Paterson asked about the bureaucracy of the system and if there would be a variation to contract. Mrs Dyker said it would be reviewed at 3 months. The guidance and the procedure were to be reviewed and it was agreed this would be done through Policy Review Group. Mr Paterson questioned if there was a flexitime policy. Mrs Dyker confirmed there was a policy but not all sections operated it.

Mr McConnell said that the Policy Review Group had reviewed the portfolio of Maternity/Paternity policies bringing them all together under one heading. It was suggested the same approach be taken in relation to flexible working practices.

ACTION: HR/Policy Review Group

7. CAPABILITY FIGURES

The Committee received an update of the number of staff currently being supported through the capability procedure. It was noted that the number of staff in the capability process had fallen from the previously reported figures. This was attributed to a number of factors including: voluntary severance/early retirement, change of career track and improved performance. Dr MacKillop said it was very helpful to have an idea of how things were progressing as they had been concerned that capability was being progressed specifically in areas of disinvestment. Dr MacKillop noted that it was positive to see the numbers dropping and requested that the figures are presented regularly at PNCC including the outcomes of cases. Mrs Dyker said it may be useful for UCU to see how the information dovetailed with their case work, and asked if the reps had seen a drop in casework. Dr MacKillop confirmed they had seen a drop. Mr Paterson was interested in knowing if any of those in the procedure had had assistance from the university and this was confirmed. The Committee noted that there had been no dismissals of Academic staff but one in Professional Services.

ACTION: HR report 6 monthly

8. WORKLOAD MODELLING UPDATE

Professor McGeorge said that he had received workload data from the Heads of School noting that, at this stage, it was all in different formats. He had requested further data from the Heads of Schools. Dr Shanks asked when the model would be implemented. Professor Ross said that once we understood how data was reported, then the Head of School would be aware of the annual number of hours and would arrange workload to fit in with that.
Dr MacKillop said it was not surprising to hear that there were disparities across schools, and asked what they were. Professor McGeorge said that the picture of how much time was being allocated for different tasks was not clear. They were trying to understand how the hours were constructed. Mr Paterson commented that it was a good thing that the University was monitoring the work given to people. It was done for Support staff and now Academic staff, but not Academic Related. Mrs Dyker said that the revised terms and conditions, specifically the agreed hours of work should support the Academic Related staff workload management. There was discussion around which information would be published and it was agreed this was a good thing to do as there were perceptions that some were working harder than others.

9. ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS

The paper on zero hours was noted. There was a request for detail on the areas where temp services, zero hours and guaranteed minimum hours were being used and why the number of contracts had come down. Mrs Dyker said it was moving in the right direction. Mrs White said it was important to note that the University’s definition of zero hours was different from the norm, because the University provides individuals with employment status.

ACTION: HR

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Partnership and Recognition Agreement

This was due to be reviewed. Mr McConnell said the Recognition Agreement was not on the web and could the review include facilities time. Mrs Dyker commented that it was not usually on the web as it was shared document between management and the unions.

ACTION: HR

Management Expenses Web Page

Mr McConnell requested an update of the management expenses page.

ACTION: D BEATTTIE

Terms and Conditions Review

Dr MacKillop asked about the timescale for the Terms and Conditions Review. Mrs Dyker said that the new ‘IPR’ draft would go to the next meeting and following this, there would be a review of the wording within the terms and conditions of employment.

Industrial Action

Dr MacKillop advised, as a courtesy, that following the positive ballot result, UCU would be participating in strike action on 25 and 26 May. Mrs Dyker commented that there was still a technical issue about the appropriateness of the ballot, and that UCU still had to invoke the JNCHES dispute resolution procedures. Mrs Dyker said that it was disappointing that UCU had requested external examiners resign from their positions and asked what the UCU Aberdeen position was. Mr McConnell said that they had not instructed this locally, however if this was a national position they would be required to follow the national line. Mrs Dyker said that this was disappointing as it would disrupt the student experience. Mr Paterson said that the Unite consultative ballot would start the next day and that they would probably be in the same position. The whole point of striking was to disrupt business. Dr MacKillop commented that the UCU instruction re external examiners spoke to the gravity of the UCU position and the unreasonableness of the negotiations. Professor Kilburn asked what form the Action Short of Strike would take. Mr McConnell confirmed it was working to contract, not partial performance.
Higher Education Governance Act

Dr MacKillop asked what the University would be doing to roll out of compliance with the Higher Education Governance Act. Professor Kilburn said the University would take a pragmatic response and would take time to do it properly. Where the University could move more quickly eg Court membership, that had already begun. There were four years to implement the Act.

Dr Shanks said that this was her last meeting as Convenor and thanked everyone for their contribution.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee was to be confirmed once the Schedule of Meetings for 2016/17 was published.