UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2015

Present: Dr R Shanks (Convenor), Professor J Kilburn, Mrs D Dyker, Mr B Paterson, Mrs C Inglis, Dr A MacKillop, Ms J Asher, Professor P Hannaford, Mr M McConnell, Mrs P Burnett, Mrs V Buchan, Mrs E Argo, C Cook (Clerk), Professor M Ross

Apologies: Professor B MacGregor, Professor P Mc George, Mrs T White, Mr O Cox

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2015 were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Appeals Policy

This had been updated and was approved.

2.2 Staff Survey

A presentation for the committee would be arranged by Anthony Anagbosso.

ACTION: HR

2.3 Car Parking Money Spend

A list of the training and development funded by this was requested.

ACTION: HR

2.4 Counter Terrorism and Security Bill

Mrs Dyker would contact Fiona Stewart again about the draft joint statement. There was also discussion around whether a report should go to Senate. Professor Kilburn clarified that Senate could not instruct action regarding this. Professor Ross said that it was an evolving situation and there were practical issues that the Act gave rise to. The Scottish guidance was more ‘light touch’ than the English.

3. VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE

Mrs Dyker said that the Restructuring committee had met three times in the previous week. There were still a few applications deferred pending further information. Some applications were reconsidered and some were overturned. 162 applications had now been approved. Mrs Dyker to circulate the final approval list.

ACTION: HR

The Committee noted the progress towards the target for savings. There was discussion around the health and safety implications of potential increased workload for staff left behind. Mrs Dyker said that the workload model would help with this and consideration of the implications on workload was taken into account by the Restructuring Committee when approving applications. This was being done again when applications, previously declined, were reviewed. All the staff lists were available for an informed basis for decision.
There was a question around why some people had leave dates at the end of March. Mrs Dyker explained that the extended leave date was to allow appropriate arrangements to be made to support the activities. The applications that were reconsidered were predominantly administrative and technical staff. The Committee discussed the principles in relation to re-engagement of staff post voluntary severance. It was confirmed that the settlement agreements precluded staff returning to the employment of the University without express permission.

There was a request to include a specific question in the next staff survey where staff could say how VS impacted on them. Mrs Inglis said that the workload model should address that issue. It was explained that the HSE had signed off the current staff survey and that it was appropriate for surveying staff on Health and Safety issues. If UCU were aware of individuals suffering from stress then they should inform management and it would be addressed. Mr McConnell said that those individuals did not want to be identified. Mrs Inglis said that if the union were unable to provide details then training on awareness of recognising signs of stress was already included in the new line manager training. UCU said they would do a survey.

There was a request for information on how many had applied for VS and how many were accepted by gender balance, and also an update percentage of current staff costs vs Turnover.

Mr Paterson commented that the original scheme was 150 posts to save £10.5 M but we had now lost 162 posts and only saved £6.7M. Mrs Inglis said that the 150 had only been an estimate, never a target.

4. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REVIEW

The Committee noted that the review was ongoing and the terms of reference and work streams had been circulated to the committee. The Committee noted that an initial report had been drafted and that the review was still a work in progress and we would continue to report when significant issues needed taking forward. Mr McConnell asked for clarification of the figures. Mrs Inglis said that the terms of reference were clear, including the expectation that the review would deliver £1M recurrent savings this year and a further £2M recurrent savings next year. The savings so far were £6.7 M which included £417,000 savings from the Professional Services Review as at 9 November.

ACTION: CI to circulate current figures.

Mrs Inglis confirmed that Colleges will remain but how they are structured was part of the Professional Services review.

5. PROMOTIONS REVIEW GROUP

The Committee was presented with the revised paperwork produced as a result of the Promotions Review Group and the 2 sub-groups. The development of the CV template was still a work in progress. There was discussion around the role of Advisers at the committee and how it would be decided if there were 1 or 2 Advisers and the criteria for doing so. Mrs Dyker clarified that it was the intention that when gathering references there would still be 2 Advisers but at the committee whether there were 1 or 2 Advisers or none at all, would be driven by the content of the references, eg if they were unanimously supportive there was no need to summarise as the Adviser was not an advocate for the applicant, but if not, then an Adviser would be at committee. There was an Adviser per application not committee, and the Chair would make the decision if needed. Mr McConnell requested another meeting of the Academic Related sub group. It was agreed that UCU would receive the final documents to circulate to their National Office.

ACTION: HR
6. **9 DAY FORTNIGHT**

The Committee received a proposal to consider a 9 day fortnight for Support and Academic Related staff and to pilot this in a number of areas. There was discussion around point 5.2 and contractual variations and it was confirmed that individuals could opt out of the scheme if they preferred. Mr McConnell said he felt it may be time consuming for managers to manage and an opportunity for less effective managers to micro manage and some staff to take advantage of the scheme. Mrs Dyker acknowledged this and said that a ‘light touch’ approach was being taken and there was no intention for a mini bureaucracy. There would be a review after the pilot. Mr McConnell said they would take it to UCU members but expected an ambiguous response. Mrs Dyker said it was a new positive flexible working arrangement.

**ACTION:** HR

7. **CAPABILITY PROCEDURE**

The Committee received an update to the current capability procedure. Dr MacKillop thanked Mrs Dyker and said that UCU were now content with the procedure and particularly happy with the third bullet point, the ‘preventative’ approach, the time limit and that if individuals were unhappy they could appeal through the grievance procedure. UCU were happy that it was adopted. Unison and Unite were also happy with the amendments to the procedure. It was requested that the policy be reviewed in 12 months as part of the Policy Review Group.

8. **PAY AWARD**

A pay award of 1% had now been agreed and would be paid in November salaries, backdated to 1 August 2015. It was noted that EIS were still in dispute but there were only about 17 members and they would be paid the increase.

9. **LIVING WAGE**

The new rate for the living wage agreed for November was £8.25 per hour. This took the rate out of grade 1. If we moved people to the next point it would go to point 1 of grade 2, so the proposal was to pay £8.25 ‘off scale’ to maintain the differential of grade and then look at again next year. Mr Paterson questioned whether this did not indicate that it was a national issue and that the single spine had not kept pace. Mrs Dyker replied that it did not erode differentials for all Universities as there were different grade boundaries. Mrs Burnett said that it was great that we had the Living Wage but she would be concerned if we lost grade differentials. Dr MacKillop said that there was still an issue with people not getting paid preparation time for Temp Services work, particularly for Post Grads working in labs. The Temp services procedure did not appear to be applied consistently across the board. A review of how it was working was requested. It was agreed that UCU would send details for CASS to Professor Ross.

**ACTION:** UCU

10. **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

There had been a short term Working Group which had developed revised documents for consideration. These reflected some of the wording discussed at the working party and attempted to present information differently in an easier way for staff to understand. The key components were in the Statement of Written Particulars with the General Terms and Conditions of Employment document alongside. This would apply to all staff except those staff who had retained BBSRC terms and conditions at the time of the merger with the Rowett Institute. Dr MacKillop said there were a couple of issues that were still being considered ie not engaging in other duties outside the University, the Intellectual Property component and working abroad. UCU confirmed that their National Officer would review the documents.
11. CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

The Committee received a new Change Management Protocol for approval. This document was intended as a starting point for discussion for structure for any change processes we were entering into. Mr McConnell said he was glad to see the document and thanked the University and had nothing to criticise in it. Unison and Unite were happy with the document and UCU agreed to take it to committee and national official for approval. There was a suggestion that notional timescales against activities would be useful.

12. TEACHING FELLOWS

There was a proposed change in job title for Teaching Fellows and Senior Teaching Fellows. This was an attempt to streamline job titles and address concerns about status. Teaching Fellows in Grade 7 and above would have an equivalent job title to those on the Teaching and Research career track. Teaching Fellow would become Lecturer (Scholarship) and Senior Teaching Fellow would become Senior Lecturer (Scholarship). Dr MacKillop said that it was a positive step but was concerned about point 4.4 the potential for those on the teaching and research track to transfer to the teaching and scholarship track. Mrs Dyker said this would be where discussion on the structure of the role had already been discussed. Some individuals had been reluctant to move from research to teaching due to the perceived detriment of the job title. Professor Kilburn said that if someone had been employed to teach but they had aspirations to move into research that would have to be managed and would be a school decision if a vacancy became open for application. Professor Ross said the promotion process also allowed for that move.

13. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

This strategy document was a starting point for working in partnership to get the Academic, Academic Related and Support staff body engaged with the institution and working together as we come out of the period of V.S. This would need a group with some members of PNCC and beyond that, to look at new initiatives to engage the workforce. Mr McConnell said he thought the broad aims were sound but there was a danger of over engineering the framework. Mrs Dyker said we would be taking forward a reward strategy. This document was a starting point for discussion and the words may change. At the moment the only feedback we got was the staff survey which was not enough. Professor Ross said there was all sorts of engagement with staff but it was no necessarily collated so we could use best practice. We had student engagement surveys. This was a way of collecting different set of data and improve staff feeling engaged and that is noticed. There was a question as to when the staff survey would be published.

14. POLICIES – PVG

The amended policy was for approval. The updates had been made as a result of the Disclosure Scotland audit and were mainly legislative changes.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mileage

Concern was expressed that now that the mileage rate for employees using their own cars on University business had been reduced, that this had potentially increased the use of hire cars therefore increasing costs.

Athena Swan Update

This was just a brief update on Athena Swan but there were reps on the Equality and Diversity Committee who would be aware of what was happening. There was a change of
structure around submissions and the Athena Swan staff had moved into the HR team. It was a moving picture and the PNCC would be kept updated. Dr Shanks asked where the UCU could help at institutional level. Professor Ross said the bronze renewal was deferred for a year and the previous submission was currently out for external review.

Policy Review Group

Mr McConnell requested that he be copied into the dates of the Policy Review Group meetings in line with PNCC.

ACTION: HR

Dental School Grades

Mrs Dyker said she would meet separately with UCU to discuss this further.

Compulsory Redundancy

Dr MacKillop said that if the University could not give assurances that there would be no compulsory redundancies then they would ask their members to ballot on moving into dispute, depending on the outcome of the further meeting on Monday which was welcomed.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee is 25 February 2016 at 10.00 am.