UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2016

Present: Professor J Kilburn (Convenor), Mrs C Inglis, Mrs D Dyker, Mr B Paterson, Mr K Sadler, Mrs E Argo, Mr O Cox, Mr F Nicol, Professor D Anderson, Dr F Pedersen, Professor M Ross, Professor P Hannaford, Professor P McGeorge, Mrs T White, C Cook (Clerk)

Apologies: Professor B MacGregor, Dr R Shanks, Dr D Marie

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2016

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2016 were approved subject to the following amendments:

‘Danette’ was spelt incorrectly and should be spelled ‘Dannette’.

6.4 should read ‘Mr Paterson asked why information on first aiders was being requested when the University already had the information.’

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Annual Leave Regulations

UCU requested a meeting on the Policy Review Group to discuss this.

2.2 Pay negotiations

UCU noted that their members had been balloted about the pay award and 57% had voted against industrial action.

2.3 Living Wage

UCU requested that it be minuted that they were very pleased with the progress made on the reduction of zero hours contracts and the implementation of the living wage but wanted to know what was being done to close the gender pay gap below professorial level. Mrs Dyker said that there had been a paper at Senate on this and the University had worked very hard to reduce any gender pay gap. This work was undertaken through the Remuneration Committee. An equal pay audit was currently underway.

ACTION: It was agreed that the outcome of the Equal Pay audit would be presented at the next PNCC.

Mrs Inglis commented that she was not aware there was a gender pay gap below grade 9 and Mrs Dyker confirmed there was not. Mr Paterson also said that as a member of the Remuneration Committee they had worked very hard to address any inequalities.

ACTION: Mrs Dyker agreed to circulate a recent paper that was presented to Senate with details regarding gender pay.
3. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REVIEW

The Committee received the oral update on the Professional Services Review. Mrs Inglis advised that there had been positive work continuing with the work streams since the last PNCC and the required financial savings would be delivered this financial year.

Professor Anderson asked if there had been an impact assessment done on the impact of the review on the student experience and the workload of other staff. Mrs Inglis confirmed that Equality Impact Assessments had been done as part of individual work streams. Professor Anderson said there had been increased timetabling, arranging teaching, checking status of research grant account, chasing payments and was curious if this had been looked at. Mrs Inglis said that these had not been raised previously and she had met with the Heads of School on several occasions to ask what additional resource they may require from the centre. The response was fairly consistent and almost unanimous that more marketing support was required. Four additional FTE's were being recruited (1 post had already been filled) and there was an additional FTE post specifically for research grant reporting that had been approved.

Professor Kilburn clarified if UCU were asking if the work had transferred from Professional Services to academic staff and if so he would want to see the evidence for that reflected in the work load model. If there was an excessive workload in a school this should be evidenced in the model. Professor Hannaford said that all had felt the reduction in support had an impact on workload and it was wrong to pretend it was not happening. However as an organisation we were very busy but not necessarily productive. We had to stop doing some things and simplify others to take the pressure out, eg look at the number of courses and programmes offered and how they were advertised. If a course ran for two students it was nearly the same work as running for ten. There were areas that could be streamlined for the benefit of all and it would be helpful if people had ideas where we could do less.

Mrs Inglis commented that she felt that Professor Anderson saw cause and effect and a number of things have happened and changed and she wanted to resist the idea that the PSR was seen as the panacea of all ill, it was an open and transparent process and not the only thing that had changed. Professor Anderson asked for an impact assessment. Professor Kilburn said this could be done quickly through the workload data which would provide data for an impact assessment.

4. TERMS AND CONDITIONS REVIEW

The Committee noted the paper on the review of terms and conditions. The Intellectual Property (IP) clause had been discussed and agreed at Senate bar minor some minor amendments which had now been implemented. The UCU comments received had been embedded and agreed. Mrs Dyker had met with Mary Senior and there were a further couple of amendments to be made, which did not appear to be contentious however these were being reviewed by colleagues in R & I. The final documents with those clauses would be circulated. Dr Pedersen was concerned about issues in building up residential status re clause 4.9. Mrs Dyker confirmed that there was extensive information in the Staff handbook on the website about immigration and individuals had to take responsibility for their own visa status.

5. CAPABILITY

The Committee noted the update on the number of staff in the Capability process. The numbers had reduced and this was due to a number of factors, some employees had successfully come out of the process and were now progressing well, some people in the process had left through voluntary severance. It was noted that the process still required further engagement from all relevant parties.
6. PROMOTION REVIEW

The Committee noted the paper on the Promotions Review. The working group had met to review the changes made to the promotions process in the previous year and the reception of the changes had been broadly positive. It had now been proposed to anonymise applications to remove the possibility of unconscious gender bias. It was agreed an application would be anonymised up to the point where role analysts assessed the applications, as it would be very difficult to do beyond that stage. Staff would be asked to complete their applications so that their gender was not revealed.

There was discussion around the use of the Cambridge and Vancouver bibliography style sheet and it was confirmed that the University used APA which was also anonymous.

Mr Nicol noted that in the previous year more females had applied for promotion than males and asked whether this was of concern. Mrs Dyker said previously more men than women had applied and work had been done to address that. Professor Ross said the group had also discussed giving information on historical statistical outputs on gender balance to the promotions panels.

7. UPDATE ON SOUTH KOREA

The Committee noted the oral update on the project in South Korea. Professor Kilburn said the project had not moved forward substantially as the circumstances in Korea had changed significantly. The University was now in discussion about what could be done differently to ensure we were targeting an appropriate market. Professor Anderson asked what point would consideration be given to pulling out of Korea. Professor Kilburn said that a significant part of the costs were covered by grant, so the costs to the University were limited, apart from the time and effort, and it still remained possible that the project could work out positively.

Professor Anderson asked what the other subject areas might be.

Action: Professor Kilburn to circulate list of potential subject areas for Korea

8. PLANS FOR RWANDA CAMPUS

Dr Anderson raised the following questions on behalf of UCU: Can we please be informed on the University’s plans to form a private sector partnership in Rwanda? How does the University intend ensuring that the University’s own terms and conditions will be upheld in Rwanda? How will the University ensure that principles underpinning the awards that the University celebrates (e.g. Athena Swan, Stonewall, Fairtrade) will be upheld in the Rwandan context? More specifically, can the University justify any plans to establish a presence in Rwanda when the UK’s own Freedom House classifies Rwanda as ‘Not Free’.

Professor Kilburn responded that plans had been discussed in detail recently at Senate. There would be a further paper with full details for approval at Senate in January. There was further due diligence to be done, and approval by Court and from the Governance & Nominations Committee would be required.

There was discussion around the ethics and morality of working in Rwanda. It was noted that it was hoped that working in these countries would help to build capacity and provide support, which was positive and beneficial and the underpinning reason why many Universities were positive about working in these countries.

Staff would not be employed by the University so not subject to University terms and conditions. There would be link tutors from University staff, but staff would not be asked to go to Rwanda.
against their wishes. Professor Anderson questioned whether if University staff were link tutors, this would this have an impact on local staff in terms of assessment and marking. Professor Kilburn said that a business case would have to be made and all additional work would be costed in, however if the capacity for the work was available in the University then we would have to question the reason for not doing it.

9. **35 HOUR WORKING WEEK**

The committee noted the paper presented by the Unite union and the request that PNCC considered the introduction of a 35 hour working week for all staff. The majority of staff in grades 5 – 9 were working an average 37.5 hour working week, however there were some areas where staff were working a 35 hour week and this raised moral and equal pay issues. Mr Paterson said that it had been on the union’s agenda to have a 35 hour average week for some time. It would be an average of 35 hours to take account of shift work and to keep overtime to a minimum. The union also noted that there was a difference between what an employee was expected to do and what an employee to choose to do e.g. for their own research and enhancement.

Mrs Dyker said that those staff working a 35 hour week were in small pockets and the numbers should be declining numbers through contractual changes. Line managers recognised the issue and how to manage it. Mr Paterson said he was aware of similar problems when Support staff terms and conditions were harmonised and he felt this had been brushed aside and not addressed so there were probably more staff on a 35 working week than those identified.

Professor Anderson asked for those staff working a 35 hour week to receive written confirmation of this. Mrs Dyker declined. The current T&C’s had been negotiated and consulted on and an average 37.5 hour working week had been agreed and the University had expected to be able to implement this. There had to be challenge where differentials in place. The cost implications were the biggest challenge to reducing to a 35 hour week, particularly for Temp Services staff.

Mr Paterson said he recognised the cost implications had to be looked at, but if costs were feasible then there would be significant benefits for staff in terms of work life balance, and it would go some way to redressing the recent low pay offers.

Mrs Dyker said there would need to be some modelling done to see if it was even possible, and it might just exacerbate the current financial challenges the University was facing. It was agreed that further modelling on the cost implications of this proposal would be taken forward.

**ACTION:** HR will take forward appropriate modelling of the proposal for further discussion.

10. **UCU DECLARATION OF DISPUTE RE COMPULSORY REDUNDANCY**

UCU advised that they had taken advice from their National Executive and that they were balloting members on Industrial Action and awaited the outcome of the ballot. They noted their appreciation that the Principal would be addressing a meeting at Foresterhill and hoped that this would be conducive to a settlement.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Presentation by David Beattie, Finance Director of Financial information to Union Representatives

UCU noted that both presentations had been useful and constructive, however they requested further information to enable them to fully interpret the information presented. There was discussion around what this information might be.
It was agreed that information on the numbers of staff and the numbers of staff externally funded and the numbers of staff who were consultants would be provided.

Action HR.

Union Casework

Dr Pedersen said that it had been noted that some requests for union reps to attend informal meetings had been met with animosity and requested that it could be made clear that UCU caseworkers could be invited to an informal meeting of a staff member with a manager.

Mrs Dyker said that what had been happening was that UCU reps had been turning up at routine meetings between a line manager and their staff member which was not appropriate. There had been ongoing discussion about how to distinguish meetings and all accepted that there was a time and place to embrace a caseworker’s contribution to a meeting.

Mr Paterson said that he always checked if a meeting was informal or not and asked the employee to check this too.

Shuttle Bus

There had been some concerns raised regarding the reliability and regularity of the U9 shuttle bus, however one staff member who used the bus regularly said they had not experienced problems.

ACTION: Mrs Inglis to raise concerns with Chris Osbeck

Mr Cox noted that there was the facility to notify staff of any problems with the bus through the Safezone app.

Request for Papers

Mr Paterson said that he was disappointed that he was the only union representative that had provided a paper as requested.

Mrs Dyker confirmed that UCU representatives had facilities time to facilitate the generation of papers required for the meeting.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the PNCC is 1 March 2016 at 10.30 am in room 100, University Office.