UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2016

Present: Professor J Kilburn (Convenor), Mrs C Inglis, Mrs D Dyker, Mr B Paterson, Mrs V Buchan, Mrs E Argo, Mr O Cox, Dr R Shanks, Dr Dannette Marie, Professor M Ross, Mrs T White, C Cook (Clerk)

Apologies: Professor B MacGregor, Professor P Hannaford, Professor P McGeorge,

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2016

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2016 were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Living Wage

Dr Shanks said there was still concern that Temp Services staff were not getting paid for preparation time. Mrs Dyker said that if UCU identified where the issues were and what they were, this could be discussed further. It was agreed that this could be discussed at the monthly operational meeting with HR, rather than PNCC.

2.2 PROTOCOL FOR CONTRACT TERMINATION

A new honorary status letter incorporating a waiver clause had been circulated to PNCC.

2.3 9 DAY FORTNIGHT UPDATE

This had been reviewed by Policy Review Group and was effective from 1 August 2016.

2.4 CAPABILITY FIGURES

UCU had requested that the figures were presented regularly at PNCC, including the outcomes of cases. The next report would be made in November.

2.5 ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS

Mrs White said she was currently working on a report with figures for the whole academic year and when this was completed it would be shared.

ACTION: HR to share once report available

2.6 MANAGEMENT EXPENSES WEB PAGE

This had now been updated on the web with information to July 2016.

2.7 HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE ACT

Mrs Inglis explained the process that had been followed so far. Originally it was thought that the legislation around the Senior Governor would be enacted by December of this year, however the Scottish Government had delayed this to July 2017. The Governance committee had met in August and would meet again the next week. It was expected the recommendation
to Court would be an appointment process rather than election this time. The new Senior Governor could hold office for a maximum of 3 years. Therefore the University would need to elect a new Senior Governor within 4 years. The Governance committee recommendation to Court, after some debate with Senate Assessors, was that there would be a Court of twenty five members to conform to statutory requirements. This was the same as current Court minus three members of the Executive.

3. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REVIEW

The Steering Group had met that week and progress against the four work streams had been considered. The main topics discussed were savings and displaced staff. There was good progress on both. The scaling down of central support was progressing and of the eleven people displaced, only one was not in a role. Mrs Inglis confirmed a draft minute of the Steering Group would be circulated to PNCC.

ACTION: C Inglis

4. PAY NEGOTIATIONS

The Unison ballot would close on 19 September, the Unite ballot on 21 September and the EIS ballot on 20 September. UCEA had advised that institutions could now pay the pay award of 1.1%. The union’s views on this were sought. Unison and Unite felt it would be inappropriate not to pay the award and the University and College Union (UCU) would not comment as they were in dispute. It was confirmed that staff would still have the option not to accept the rise if they so wished.

5. VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE UPDATE

The Committee noted the oral update on Voluntary Severance. The Voluntary Severance Scheme was open to staff in the school of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition. The closing date was 30 September. However there had been fewer applications than hoped at that point. There would be further discussions through the Joint Consultative Committee on Redundancy Avoidance (JCCRA) including consultation over criteria for Compulsory redundancy.

5. TERMS AND CONDITIONS REVIEW

Professor Ross said the review was progressing well with initial discussions focusing on intellectual property and then other terms and conditions. Dr Shanks clarified when the 6 month review of the new terms and conditions would take place and Mrs Dyker confirmed that was happening on 12 September. Professor Kilburn said that once any changes were agreed these would be brought back to Senate.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

1) University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Mr Qamar said that the Health and Safety policy was traditionally updated annually and this was last done in 2012. The title had been updated to include ‘Wellbeing’, clarifying roles and responsibility of a Safety Adviser, which after consultation, had been renamed Health and Safety Coordinator. The policy had been to the Health and Safety committee twice, and would now proceed for approval to Operating Board and Court. Dr Marie, commented that the wellbeing element of the policy seemed like an add on, though she realised there were alternative policies relating to wellbeing. Professor Ross said that there had been discussion about where health and wellbeing, mental health and being healthy at work were best placed. A mental health policy was being developed through active discussion. Mr Qamar said that
the part on wellbeing in the policy was a general statement and specific areas were covered elsewhere. Mrs Inglis suggested calling it Health, Wellbeing and Safety Policy.

Dr Shanks said it was perceived that accidents were taken more seriously than work related stress. Mr Qamar said that was not his experience, accidents were visible whereas stress was dealt with in a more confidential way. Dr Shanks said there were other underlying issues that were not being addressed. Mrs Dyker said it would be useful to have examples of these so that action could be taken to address them.

2) Lone Working Policy

This was a policy now rather than a guidance document and included a risk assessment to identify safeguarding measures. The policy was based on best practice and not just HSE guidance and was supported by a template document. The University also had a ‘safe zone app’, which could monitor lone workers and through that, enable them to get help quickly. Mr Paterson said it was only fully compatible with android and IOS. Mr Cox said that you could use it through a desktop by signing onto the desktop. Security would then know you were there and check on you regularly.

Dr Shanks flagged there was some concern about workload associated with risk assessments for lone workers. She clarified that if someone was teaching one evening per week, then they only had to do one risk assessment per year, but had to one for each field trip. Dr Qamar confirmed that was correct, provided circumstances didn’t change. Dr Shanks clarified if it was the responsibility of the line manager to make sure the risk assessment was done and this was confirmed. Mr Qamar confirmed that the risk assessment had been tested with School of Biological Sciences and they had no concerns or issues. Mrs Argo said that there were different issues now that some people had moved into the Rowett building and this was acknowledged.

3) Overseas Travel

There was discussion around ‘Driving Abroad’ and fatigue associated with flight and time zone and driving on arrival. It was agreed to change the wording and remove ‘considerably’.

ACTION: N QAMAR

4) First Aiders

Mr Paterson asked why information on first aiders was being requested when the University already had the information. Mr Qamar confirmed it was to check records.

7. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH

Professor Ross summarised progress. A draft Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy and a Healthy Working policy were being developed. (which included students). There were two separate working groups focussing on employee engagement and mental health. These included representation from across the University including Mr Qamar, HR, Student Support, chaplaincy and, for the Mental Health Working Group, those with expertise to collate the information and propose how the mental health strategy should be developed.

Dr Marie said that there was concern from Personal Tutors that their role was changing and there had been a lack of consultation. Professor Ross confirmed that there was no intention to change the role of Personal Tutor. A Personal Tutor had a pastoral care role in relation to students. A line manager had the same for staff. The aim was to try to equip all those people to cope with, what appeared to be an emerging trend of mental health issues. A number of people were undertaking the Mental Health training now being offered. The Personal Tutor job description was not being changed. This was an opportunity for Personal Tutor’s to
develop skills for a situation, not to deal with it, but to know where to signpost individuals to get assistance.

9. ANNUAL LEAVE REGULATIONS

Mr Paterson said that there were two sets of annual leave regulations and the problem was how they were implemented as line managers were not aware of them and application was therefore inconsistent. It was agreed that this would be picked up through the Policy Review Group.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Buchan said that she would be retiring in October and Fergus Nicol would be the representative for Prospect.

Professor Kilburn thanked Mrs Buchan for her contribution to the PNCC.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the PNCC is 16 November 10.30 am in the Court Room.