UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2014

Present: Mr B Paterson (Convener), Professor S D Logan, Professor P McGeorge, Professor M Ross, Mrs C Inglis, Mrs P Burnett, Mrs E Argo, Mrs R Shanks, Mrs D Dyker, Ms F Stewart, Mrs C McLeod, Mrs D Massie, Mrs P Williams, Dr A Price (in attendance) and Mrs H Crabb (Clerk)

Apologies: Professor M Greaves, Professor B MacGregor

The Convener opened the meeting by paying tribute to Dr Maitland Mackie’s contribution to the work of the University, both as Rector and member of the University Court. It was agreed that Dr Mackie’s invaluable contribution as Convener of Staffing & Development Committee should be recognised and formally recorded in the minute of the meeting.

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRURY 2014

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2014 were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Pay Negotiations and Industrial Action

The Committee noted that a number of formal grievances had been taken forward in relation to the University’s decision to deduct a whole day’s pay from individuals who had participated in the industrial action. The Committee also noted that some appeals had been submitted following this process.

The Committee was advised that all Trade Unions within the HE sector had accepted the 2% pay offer and noted that UCEA would continue to work with representatives at a national level in relation to a number of pay and staffing policy related matters.

2.2 Future of Advising

The Committee was advised that, following consideration of the request made by UCU representatives at the last meeting, it had been decided that a one-off payment would not be made to members of staff who had previously undertaken the role of Adviser of Studies. Furthermore, it had been decided that it would not be appropriate to pay any honoraria in respect of advising duties, including to members of staff within CLL, as such activities formed part of Academic staff job descriptions.

2.3 Employee Advantages

The Committee was advised that focus groups had been arranged to obtain feedback on the Employee Advantages Scheme and anticipated receiving a further update at the next meeting.
The following two items were also raised as Matters Arising:

2.4 **Support Staff Promotion**

The Committee was advised that HR Advisers were continuing to raise the profile of the Support Staff Promotion Procedures with Line Managers across the University. It was noted that a formal review of the Procedure would be undertaken as part of the annual Promotion Exercise review process.

2.5 **Framework of Academic Expectations**

The Committee was advised that the review of the FAE was still ongoing. The UCU representative asked if UCU representatives would be included in the review process. The Committee was advised that the review would be conducted outwith the working group and that the outcome would be reported via PNCC.

3. **TRANSPORT UPDATE**

The Committee noted the update which had been received from the Transport Co-ordinator. The Trade Union representatives welcomed the return of the shuttle bus service between Foresterhill and Old Aberdeen.

4. **REVIEW OF TU FACILITIES**

The Committee noted and endorsed the report of the short-life working group. It was noted that the Agreement would be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the report and revised Facilities Agreement, subject to the following amendments:

- Explicit reference to Trade Union representatives being invited to attend the monthly induction sessions
- Reference to the continuation of the inclusion of information about the recognised Trade Unions within starter packs issued to new members of staff

**ACTION:** Clerk

5. **SMOKING POLICY**

The Committee noted the proposed revisions to the Smoking Policy. The Committee also noted the proposed ‘light touch’ enforcement policy which would be adopted by NHS Grampian with a view to encouraging a culture change amongst smokers on the site. It was noted in particular that the smoking shelters at Foresterhill would be for the use of members of the public only.

Some concerns were expressed that challenges may be encountered on the Old Aberdeen campus as a result of the high numbers of students who smoke outside buildings. The Committee agreed to recommend that the Policy be considered by the Student Affairs Committee and anticipated receiving further updates.

**ACTION:** Clerk

6. **ALLOWANCES**

The Committee noted the amendments which had been made to the proposals in relation to Acting Up and Additional Responsibility Allowances. The Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the proposal, subject to an amendment to reflect that individuals in receipt of
an Acting Up Allowance would not be eligible to receive a Contribution Award for the same activities.

ACTION : Clerk

It was agreed that a discussion would take place outwith the meeting between the UCU representative and the Director of HR in relation to individual cases which may be affected by the implementation of the proposals.

ACTION : Director of HR/UCU representatives

7. NINE MONTH TEACHING CONTRACTS

The Committee noted the THE press article dated 3 April 2014 and was advised that the Principal had stated that he had been misquoted in relation to the introduction of nine month teaching contracts.

8. PLANS FOR EMPLOYING OVERSEAS STAFF

The Committee was advised that the University was not able to employ staff overseas on a permanent basis. The Committee noted that whilst an advert had been placed for University of Aberdeen roles based overseas, the individuals had been appointed through an agency as the University does not have any employment rights in that country. The UCU representatives were offered the opportunity to discuss any specific cases in more detail outwith the meeting with the Director of HR if they wished.

ACTION : Director of HR/UCU representatives

9. CAPABILITY ISSUES

The UCU representatives expressed concerns regarding the use of the Capability Procedure within the College of Life Sciences and Medicine. In particular, concerns were expressed that the Procedure was being used as a tool for performance management and as an inappropriate substitute for informal, supportive line management discussions. Concerns were also expressed that non-inclusion in the REF had been used as a trigger to invoke the Procedure.

The Committee was advised that the Capability Procedure was being implemented across the University, including in Professional Services areas, and noted that positive feedback had been received from both members of staff and line managers involved. Positive feedback which had been received from members of staff in the College of Life Sciences and Medicine, where such discussions had resulted in workload issues being addressed, was also highlighted.

The Committee was also advised that whilst the REF offered the opportunity to review workloads as a snapshot in time, non-inclusion in the REF was not being used as the sole criterion on which to invoke the Capability Procedure.

It was agreed that a discussion would take place outwith the meeting between the UCU representative and the Director of HR to review individual cases which had caused concern.

ACTION : Director of HR/UCU representatives

10. POLICY REVIEW GROUP

The Committee welcomed the proposal to review the Trainee Protocols and Staffing Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace and anticipated receiving further updates.
11. **PROBATION REVIEW – TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee noted the proposed Terms of Reference and agreed to recommend that the title of the review be amended to read “Review of Probation Procedures”.

**ACTION**: Clerk

12. **PROFESSIONAL UPDATE FOR GTCS REGISTERED TEACHERS**

The Committee noted and endorsed the proposal from the School of Education working group.

13. **HONORARY STATUS**

The Committee welcomed the proposal to establish the additional category of Honorary status within the University. It was agreed that the possibility of Honorary Partners obtaining ASV membership on the same terms as those awarded full Honorary status would be investigated.

**ACTION**: Clerk

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Committee thanked Mr Paterson for undertaking the role of Convener during the 2013/14 session and welcomed the work which had been completed during his tenure. The Committee also thanked Mrs Crabb for her efforts as Clerk to the Committee.

The Committee also thanked Mrs McLeod for her valuable contribution to the work of the Secretarial Staff Liaison Committee, Support Staff Liaison Committee and Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee over many years and wished her a long and happy retirement.

The Committee noted that, in line with the procedures underpinning the University Schedule of Meetings Calendar, PNCC meetings should take place between 10am and 4pm. It was noted that the meeting had taken place outwith these times due to the difficulties which had been encountered in convening a quorate meeting and thanks were expressed to the members for making themselves available to attend.

The Committee was advised that the University had not received any further information from USS regarding the ongoing consultation process since the last meeting.

15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee will be published in the University Schedule of Meetings Calendar 2014/15.