UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
PARTNERSHIP NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2014

Present: Mr B Paterson (Convener), Professor S D Logan, Professor P McGeorge, Professor M Ross, Professor B MacGregor, Mrs R Shanks, Mrs D Dyker, Ms F Stewart, Mrs C McLeod, Mrs D Massie, Mrs P Williams and Mrs H Crabb (Clerk)

Apologies: Professor M Greaves, Mrs C Inglis, Mrs P Burnett, Mrs E Argo

The Convener noted that Rachel Shanks and Fiona Stewart had been confirmed as the UCU representatives on the Committee for the remainder of the Session.

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2013

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2013 were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Pay Negotiations and Industrial Action

The UCU representatives highlighted their opposition to the University's decision to withhold a full day's pay from members who had participated in the 2 hour strike action. The Committee was advised that UCU was seeking legal advice on this matter and was considering pursuing legal action through an unlawful deduction of wages claim. In addition, the UCU representatives requested that the University give consideration to donating salaries which had been withheld to the Student Hardship Fund.

The UCU representatives also raised concerns about the tone of the email which had been issued to all staff regarding the University's position on the industrial action and pension contributions. In response to concerns which were raised regarding anxiety caused to members of staff following previous instances of industrial action who had received messages that HR staff had tried to contact them, the UCU representatives were assured that the University's position had changed and that all staff were now presumed to be working as normal unless they advised to the contrary. It was agreed that, to ensure consistency of approach, line managers would be reminded of the University's position in this regard. It was also agreed that the wording of the email issued to staff regarding pension contributions would be reviewed.

UCU representatives asked what communications there had been between UoA and UCEA regarding the 2013-2014 pay claim and were advised that there were no longer any such communications taking place as negotiations on that round had now closed. The Committee was advised that the University remained part of the national pay bargaining structures and that the consultation process for the 2014/15 negotiations had commenced. It was also confirmed that the University had budgeted for a 1% pay uplift. In addition, it was highlighted that the USS consultation process (ref agenda item 10) would also require to be taken account of in the new negotiating round.

3. TRANSPORT UPDATE

3.1 Report from Transport Co-Ordinator
The Committee noted the report which had been provided by the Transport Co-Ordinator. It was agreed that further clarification on the following would be sought in advance of the next meeting:

- operating costs of the shuttle bus, which appeared to have risen over the past year at the same time as the level of service had been reduced
- the £4k expenditure for ‘training and behavioural change’
- progress made on the proposal to re-start the Old Aberdeen/Foresterhill minibus service during peak hours as discussed at the AGSSR meeting in February 2014

It was also agreed that the re-opening of the Kittybrewster station in particular would be advantageous to University staff and therefore, further representations would be made to the Nestrans Planning Group in this regard.

**ACTION:** Transport Co-Ordinator

The Committee was advised that the current condition of the Bedford Road car park had been discussed at CapEx and the Library Board. The Committee was also advised that the City Council had confirmed that 48% of the taxi fleet was accessible and that a commitment had been made to increase this to 100% of the non-private hire cars by 2017.

### 3.2 Car Parking for Pregnant Women at Foresterhill

The UCU representatives highlighted that members had raised concerns that women in the later stages of pregnancy regularly faced a long walk from the car parks to various buildings on the Foresterhill site. It was agreed that steps would be taken to ensure the transparency of the process which was in place to request the appropriate permissions from the Transport Co-Ordinator to use disabled spaces for anyone experiencing temporary mobility difficulties. It was agreed that consideration would be given to highlighting this process in any future general transport updates issued to staff and that a link to the parking permit application process would be added to the Family Friendly section on StaffNet. It was noted, however, that due regard would require to be given to ensuring that the limited number of spaces available for disabled members of staff was not compromised.

**ACTION:** Clerk/Transport Co-Ordinator

### 4. ALLOWANCES

The Committee noted the amendments which had been made to the proposal since the previous meeting and approved it in principle. It was agreed that further discussions would take place outwith the Committee to establish the appropriate level of retainer payments.

### 5. APPLICATIONS FOR PROMOTION

#### 5.1 Support Staff

Concerns were expressed at the low level of applications, particularly for promotion, which had been submitted by members of Support Staff since the introduction of the revised promotion procedures. It was agreed that feedback from line managers would be sought to check the level of awareness of the revised procedures and the responsibilities of supervisors/line managers within them.

**ACTION:** Clerk

#### 5.2 Promotion Exercise 2013 (including appeal outcomes)
The UCU representatives requested that a more in-depth analysis of the statistics be undertaken. It was agreed that a list of the specific information being sought would be provided to the Clerk in advance of the next meeting.

**ACTION**: UCU representatives

The Committee was advised that the 10% uplift had only been applied to Academic Related applications for promotion which had been considered by the University Administration Promotion Sub-Committee. The Committee was also advised that all unsuccessful applications, including those from individuals who had not submitted an appeal, had been reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the uplift.

The Committee received confirmation that any salary uplifts made outwith the Promotion Procedures were reported to the Remuneration Committee.

6. **EMPLOYEE ADVANTAGES BENEFIT SCHEME**

The Committee welcomed the uptake of the Scheme which had been reported. However, concerns were expressed that a number of individuals, particularly lower paid staff, had found it difficult to participate due to the cost of buying the initial pre-paid discount card. It was agreed that further work would be undertaken, in partnership with Trade Union representatives, to investigate usage of the Scheme in more detail and identify potential mechanisms which could be put in place to increase its uptake.

**ACTION**: HR staff/TU representatives

7. **ABERDEEN WEIGHTING**

The Committee was advised that Aberdeen City Council was currently considering the proposal to implement an Aberdeen Weighting allowance. It was agreed that the position of other public sector organisations across the city would be kept under review by the University and that cognisance would have to be given to the affordability of any such proposal.

8. **FRAMEWORK OF ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

The UCU representatives highlighted that the Framework had never been formally agreed and sought information on its current status within the University. The Committee was advised that the metrics and expectations contained within the document were being reviewed as part of a consultation process between the Principal and Heads of School, with a view to achieving a better reflection of the operation of different disciplines. The Committee was informed that the outcomes of the consultation process would be shared with Trade Union colleagues during the final stages of the work to identify revisions to the Framework.

9. **FUTURE OF ADVISING**

It was agreed that consideration would be given to the request received from UCU representatives that a one-off payment, in the region of £250, be made to individuals who had been Advisers of Studies as a goodwill gesture in view of the ending of the honorarium payment system.

Concerns were expressed regarding the distribution of Personal Tutees amongst Academic staff in some areas and it was suggested that any specific issues should be highlighted directly to the appropriate Heads of College.

10. **USS CONSULTATION**
The Committee noted the ongoing USS consultation process and anticipated receiving further updates.

11. REVIEW OF TU FACILITIES

The Committee noted the work which was ongoing within the Review of TU Facilities Working Group and anticipated receiving further updates.

12. REVIEW OF ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS

The Committee noted the work which was ongoing within the Review of Zero Hours Contracts Group and anticipated receiving further updates.

13. IAMS PILOT SCHEME UPDATE

The Committee noted the summary of the pilot scheme to date and concerns were expressed that a large number of staff had not given consent to be contacted as part of the IAMS process. It was agreed that discussions would take place outwith the Committee to identify mechanisms which could be implemented to increase the numbers of staff participating in the scheme.

ACTION : HR Staff/TU representatives

14. ANNUAL REVIEW

The Committee noted the outcomes of the Appraisal Review Working Group and was reminded that the introduction of the Annual Review had been the result of a lengthy consultation process. The UCU representatives noted that the Framework of Academic Expectations was included as part of the document, and highlighted that it had not been agreed. However, the Committee was advised that the UCU representatives on the Working Group had made this point during the consultation process and had indicated that they did not wish to delay the review process on this point alone. In this connection, clarity had been sought that the Framework could be used as a tool to inform the Annual Review process, in the same way as the Promotion Procedure could be, should an individual and line manager choose to engage with it in that way.

The Committee noted that the Annual Review forms had been agreed by Operating Board, following a wide-ranging consultation process which had included the Directors’ Group and College Executives. In addition, it was noted that the progress of the Working Group had previously been reported to PNCC.

The Committee welcomed the introduction of a training programme to support both Reviewers and members of staff being reviewed.

15. PROJECT SEARCH UPDATE

The Committee welcomed the progress which had been made on the programme to date and anticipated receiving further updates.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee noted that all institutional policies and procedures were published on the Policy Zone section of StaffNet and it was suggested that specific concerns about local variations should be discussed outwith PNCC.
The Committee was advised that travel disruptions were anticipated as a result of forthcoming work planned for Mugiemoss Road and noted this situation in relation to future meetings of PNCC.

The UCU representatives highlighted the University’s commitment to delivering a Student Experience ‘second to none’ and requested details about the current position and future plans in relation to improving the Staff Experience. It was agreed that the UCU representatives would provide suggestions for further consideration and which could be used to inform the development of the forthcoming Staff Survey.

ACTION : TU Representatives

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee is 15 May 2014 at 10am.