

# **UHI | NORTH, WEST AND HEBRIDES A TUATH, AN IAR IS INNSE GALL**

NWH Learning, Teaching & Research Committee Meeting

Chair – Sarah Fraser

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025, 16:15 - 18:00 via MS Teams

## **Present**

Debbie Miller, Vice Principal Strategic Projects

Derek Lewis, Chair of the NWH Board of Management

Diana MacLeod, Head of Curriculum & Student Services

Ellen Campbell, Secretary to the Board of Management

Fiona Grant, Senior Responsible Officer

Hannah Ritchie-Muir, Vice Principal (Academic

Lydia Rohmer, Principal & Chief Executive

Michael Foxley, Independent Non-Executive Board Member

Rupert Marshall, Independent Non-Executive Board Member

Sarah Fraser, Chair of LT&R Committee & Independent Non-Executive Board Member

Kara Smith, SME Educational research, KE & writing

Rebecca Rennell, Barra & Harris Unearthed

Emily Gal, Barra & Harris Unearthed

Caroline MacPherson, HISA

William Macdonald, Vice Chair of the NWH Board of Management

## **1. Quorum, Welcome and Apologies (SF)**

Apologies; Stuart Gibb

## **The meeting was quorate**

## **2. Declarations of Interest and Connection (SF)**

Both MF & RM declared their roles as members of both Cnoc Soilleir and North, West and Hebrides Boards.

## **3. Minutes 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024 (SF)**

### **Approved**

## **4. Request to star unstarred agenda items (SF)**

7,12,13,15

## **5. Corporate parenting plan (HRM)**

UHI NWH had been working the UHI CPP framework. There were presented the legalities and duties to support students from the initial application process whereby they can be identified which triggers high-level support. Personal support was structured for individuals through learning pathways and onward to exit. These were

sensitive conversations which any student could have at any point in their learner journey, though it would remain the right of the individual to declare any assistance they may require.

RM commented that as this was a public facing document, page 4, paragraph 2 was confusing and could be reworded. The picture on page 3 was an image that could be revised. The Chair and DL advised that although the plan looked comprehensive, the Board would need to understand the delivery of care for our students with care targets (KPIs). HRM would look at the data and successful outcomes for identified priority groups. There would be a system to check progress and make comparisons.

**Action:** The team were requested to provide data and quarterly reviews with KPIs to be included within the student experience report.

### **Approved for Board**

6. Presentation SME - Educational research, KE and writing (Kara Smith- lecturer on research methods programmes)

The Chair and committee acknowledged the importance of the topic presented and that the subject would be monitored as NWH develop their expertise in research programmes. KS advised that the numbers of researchers were decreasing, however a minimum capacity of four per team was required to complete any research programme that the college had contracted to. Research could be included within the contracts to align with REF requirements.

### **Noted**

7. Presentation Barra & Harris unearthed – Rebeccas Renell and Emily Gal

RR advised that their archaeology project had recently been awarded funding of £616,230 in total. A travelling expedition had been ongoing to compliment the project, engaging with schools and communities. More than 15,000 people had engaged with the project. There had been 8000 downloads of the app. Three national awards had been won, demonstrating the success of the project. A book was in its final stages before being available in shops this summer of 2025. RR further advised that not only would the team be carrying on with the project over the next three years, but the vision was also to use the project as a springboard to develop further research, knowledge exchange and community projects. It was felt that there was a huge potential for developing short courses and to develop the archaeology department further.

RR requested that research be included in contracts, additional staff be provided for curriculum delivery, that archaeology development time be protected, administration support be provided, marketing support and a minibus be considered.

Archaeology had rarely been cited as a reason to visit the Hebrides, the work of the team involved in the project, media articles, recognition and awards had increased footfall significantly.

**1705** WMD joined.

The committee complimented the team on their well-deserved success and would support their vision to grow. It was suggested that the Board members visit the project in June while attending the quarterly board meeting in South Uist. Marketing and promotion opportunities may be an option through merchandising and advertising what was being achieved at NWH and Cnoc Soilleir. LR & DM would investigate REF funding options.

The Chair added that RR and EG had been incredibly successful in raising outside funding and asked for a future presentation detailing how this had been achieved.

**Action** RR & EG to provide future presentation detailing how this had been achieved.

**Noted**

**1709** RR & EG left

#### 8. HISA Report - Caroline Macpherson

CM presented the hi-lights from the HISA report, advising that there had been a very successful turnout of Student Voice Reps. There had been some issues, for example, the issue at Fort William Cafe which had been fixed by having a conversation, there was envisaged to be some more complex conversations, and she was working closely with staff. HISA reported to have held voting for elections. There had been a 4.17% turnout which was 50% more than last year. Three new reps had been elected in each of the three geographical areas of North, West and Hebrides. All information was available on the website. There would be more information for the next Board & Committee reports.

**1719** KS left.

**Noted**

**1721** CM left.

#### 9. Research Strategy & 10. R&KE quarterly report Debbie Miller (verbal update)

The research strategy was in the process of being reviewed and refined as it had evolved to make sure it had covered all headings. Staff survey data would be included to make sure that the team had gathered all the people engaged in small bits of research. There had been 35 responses to the survey (80-85% return). The team were always actively looking for new funding opportunities.

1725 Board Secretary dropped out until 1727 (internet issue)

DL asked for a timeframe for when the Board would see the strategy report to evidence if research projects were on track in terms of funding commitments, trends, that NWH were delivering what we are supposed to be delivering in the requested subject areas.

**Action** DM will discuss with Stuart Gibb. The team had been reporting back to funders and would arrange a similar report to the next round of committees which would include RAG ratings (Research monitoring report and financial reports would come from the CFO).

**Noted**

#### 11. International Plan Debbie Miller (verbal update)

There would be a report going to Board 26.03.2025 detailing the opportunities in areas such as golf and hydrogen. There had been £25k (inclusive of local authority input) for the hydrogen team in Stornoway to work with two small colleges in Africa. There was collaboration with colleges in Malaga for golf projects. There was also the development of a Masters in sustainability with a college in Iceland.

There was no known UHI international strategy for recruitment presently. The committee agreed that NWH required their own strategy in this field. It may be possible to use Perth's expertise and work with the partner with most experience. There had been a new UHI appointment to drive international student recruitment. It would be prudent to identify the scope and parameters of the role to encapsulate NWH requirements.

The Principal advised that a report would go to the June Board.

The Chair commented that full support should be given Debbie and her team to drive this forward. People, knowledge, time and money.

**Noted**

#### 12. UHI Applications dashboard 2025/26

HRM talked through the paper. Year one had increased since last year, though work was still ongoing through to enrolment. Direct entry students were fewer and there had been work ongoing with these students to ensure applications were completed. FE showed a more positive picture this year, there was work in progress liaising with students to convert into offers. The online resource was now available in all schools.

**Noted**

#### 13. Curriculum, performance & student experience report

HRM was confident that NWH would achieve FE targets. The figure for HE and for post grad were at 70%. This had been reported to F&GP.

**1748** TK joined.

TK advised that there had been one early student satisfaction survey to this point, response rates had been low but better than last year. Currently in week 6 of NSS survey, slightly up on last year at 38%, there had been engagement and a curriculum staff drive. The Chair and committee thanked HRM and TK, recognising a mainly positive report.

**Noted**

14. Curriculum plan for 2025/26

HRM advised that the assumption was being made that credit targets were remaining the same. A summary was given of changes where it was hoped to offer new activities. There would be a review with local schools etc. HE developments would be happening in the following year and the year after.

Practical elements of courses were delivered on campus. There had been work ongoing identifying which online courses could be increased as this would lead to an increase in students and funding. FG added that NWH were also working with partners throughout UHI. Opportunities were being sought to share teaching.

The committee welcomed seeing there had been a second cohort in construction.

**Action** HRM/FG provide a more precise breakdown of the categories within the plan.

**Noted**

15. Curriculum growth plans – Diana Macleod

Diana Macleod advised that a newly appointed Gaelic Co-ordinator would be taking up their post from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 and that there was a forward look to recruiting more Gaelic tutors. Plans were being put in place to extend international reach. The link between archaeology and Gaelic was to be further explored. A future forward look to early years Gaelic was also being developed.

Adam Robertson spoke to the Health and social care element of the plan. Seventy percent of construction projects within Scotland will be in the NW of Scotland and the curriculum had been tailored to be ready for that.

The Principal advised that the college had been working hard to build a more strategic response to these opportunities. There were huge advantages here as a college within the construction boom area, however more detail was required as to how that will be capitalised on. There was reported to be £110bn inward investment over the next 10 years and 80,000 new jobs, based on HIE/HIREP data. There was work in progress to support curriculum growth as outlined here. Hydrogen was an area to build on, as there was no outlay for NWH. This was one aspect of a major area of opportunities for NWH.

MF asked that this item be taken back to the next LT&R committee agenda. He advised that support from Bord na Gaelic re Gaelic short courses would be feasible.

**Noted**

**A.O.B.**

**Meeting closed 1826**