

Meeting Minutes

Meeting	Trustee Board	X
	Management Board	
	Executive Committee	
	Finance & Commercial Development	
	Appointments & Remuneration	
	Compliance, Governance & Risk	
	Other:	

Meeting Date	04/04/2024
Meeting Time	09:30-12:30
Attendance	
Present	William Campbell (President (Chair)) Gary Souter (Vice President (Education)) Janet Hackel (External Trustee) Neil Stewart (External Trustee) Irene Hynd (External Trustee) Edward Abbott-Halpin (External Trustee) Iain Morrison (Observer (UHI Dean of Students)) Carly-Skye Fraser (Student Trustee) Rachel Burn (Chief Executive Officer) Wendy Day (Director of Finance and Operations) Simon Varwell (Director of Student Engagement and Representation) Emma Miller (Community Engagement Manager) Mark Stanley (Communications and Commercial Development Committee)
Apologies	Victoria Hutchinson (Student Trustee)

SECTION A	
Section	Minutes
1. Welcome and Meeting Management	
1.1 Apologies	Victoria Hutchinson
1.2 Declarations of Interest	None
1.3 Minutes from 14 th December 2024	[Paper: HTB0424-01] Minutes of the previous meeting on 14 th December 2024 were approved as read

<p>1.4 Action Log from 14th December 2023</p>	<p>[Paper: HTB0424-02]</p> <p>Trustee profiles added to website All Trustee profiles have now been added to the HISA website.</p> <p>Rescheduling of meeting Complete</p>
<p>2. Sub-Committees</p>	
<p>2.1 Sub-Committee Membership</p>	<p>To be covered under paper 07 later in the agenda.</p>
<p>2.2 Finance and Commercial Development</p>	<p>It was noted that all the key items from this committee were included later on the agenda.</p>
<p>2.3 Appointments and Remuneration Summary</p>	<p>No updates, this committee has not met since the last Trustee Board meeting</p>
<p>2.4 Compliance, Governance and Risk Summary</p>	<p>Thanks were given to Neil Stewart who chaired the last committee meeting. Thanks were also given to Edward Abbott-Halpin who has agreed to take on the chairing of this committee going forward.</p> <p>Neil noted the very helpful inclusion and impact of Nicholas Oakley from UHI on the Board as an observer.</p>
<p>3. Executive Update</p>	
<p>3.1 Principal Officers Report</p>	<p>WC noted that he and GS had been active in a number of areas since the last Trustee Board meeting.</p> <p>WC continues to advocate for fairer transport process for students with transport companies and was involved in the recruitment of permanent the Vice Chancellor alongside a student panel.</p> <p>Both WC and GS noted that there had been a lot of work recently for HISA in terms of supporting and working with students affected by announcements from some APs about proposed cuts to programmes but that in Moray, HISA had been able to successfully advocate for the Fine Arts programme alongside affected students, winning a one-year reprieve. We are also involved at Moray in going into classes and collecting student views.</p> <p>Work is underway on refreshing our lapsed Student Mental Health Agreement in partnership with the UHI mental health team and ThinkPositive at the NUS.</p>

	<p>GS has been involved in QAA events, interviewing and is currently working on writing an AI policy with UHI staff to support student and creating connections with Simon Varwell in the PGR community.</p> <p>Other work includes supporting students worried about Action Short of Strike and marking boycotts and the effect on marking and their ability to progress in their studies, supporting Officers where they want to develop policies and actions around gender neutral toilets across the UHI estate and how we can better support networked students and how they engage with HISA.</p>
<p>4. CEO Update</p>	
<p>4.1 CEO Report</p>	<p>RB summarised her report by stating that she and SV had received an excellent introduction to UHI to date with welcoming in-person visits to Inverness, Perth, Moray, Argyll, SAMS and HTC and online meetings at their request with NWH, Shetland and Orkney. A visit to SMO is planned for mid-May and discussions are underway about visits to more locations during the better weather and when in-person attendance is appropriate in a cost-conscious environment.</p> <p>The development of the new HISA strategy is continuing at pace. The questionnaires to be sent out to seek views are now built online and are with a few staff to test, alongside writing an email to launch the survey. We will be writing to APs soon to keep them informed.</p> <p>Some great successes recently – NUS Scotland awards, Littlejohn vase, newsletter open rates, initial work on a HISA Gaelic policy and funding applications.</p> <p>Early work on diversifying HISA’s income was also highlighted.</p>
<p>4.2 CEO Performance Management and Remuneration</p>	<p>Paper was approved with the recommendation to review the August review date</p>
<p>4.3 CEO Governance Review</p>	<p>Following discussions at the CGR sub-committee, a mini review of governance and ToRs for the Trustee Board and its sub-committees has been carried out.</p> <p>DECISIONS: It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the proposed recommendations were approved • RB would make the relevant changes to ToRs • More detailed reviews of the ToRs for each of the sub-committees would be conducted at future sub-committee meetings to tighten wording about what sub-committees can decide and what needs

	<p>to be referred to the Trustee Board for approval and wording will be brought back for further discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RB to speak to one Trustee about their term of office and a possible second term
<p>5. Departmental Updates</p>	
<p>5.1 Student Engagement and Representation</p>	<p>A significant amount of activity is underway in this new Directorate including the development of a Directorate plan, refreshing of SVR activity and planning for by-elections and summer training for Officers.</p> <p>SV made a request to the Board to commit £5K of funding into 24/25 on the pilot of Subject Interns in two Cognate Subject Groups. It was agreed that whilst this was a risk to commit funds before our Block Grant was known, that this was work that HISA should be doing, so the request was approved. It was agreed that SV would circulate his paper on the interns to the Board for information. Several Trustees also cautioned any commitment for future years before knowing what our funding will cover.</p> <p>The Board received a presentation from Aimee Cuthbert, Development Manager for Perth & Moray, on the Board of Management project that she has been leading. Huge thanks were noted for Aimee on this huge and important piece of work and for an excellent update.</p> <p>DECISIONS: The Board approved the £5K spend in 24/25 for the pilot of subject interns</p>
<p>5.2 Communications and Commercial</p>	<p>MS highlighted the excellent student newsletter open rates – 19% in February and an extraordinary 58% in March. More work will be done over time, looking into open rates by APs, demographics etc. The implementation of our new MSL website is now complete and we are moving into a development and enhancement phase. Work also underway on the online shop and on how we can develop a single sign-on for students to help with access and voting activity.</p>
<p>5.3 Community Engagement</p>	<p>EM stated how delighted her Department was to have received three nominations for NUS Scotland awards and 1 win. Sports activity is developing really well with over 500 members of sports clubs, 250 members of other clubs plus networks, making a grand current total of 800 members of clubs and societies. There has also been a net increase of 4 societies since the last report. Long term, the MSL website will allow better reporting of numbers.</p> <p>EM is very keen to develop some academic societies in 24/25 which would be based on a collaboration between academic department, us and students and is also making plans on showcasing our clubs and socs at Freshers/Welcome Weeks.</p>

	<p>One concern was raised about the amount of funding available for clubs and socs to bid for to support themselves which has not kept pace with their growth. It was agreed that WD and RB would review options. IM made a helpful suggestion to point the clubs and societies at the UHI Development Fund as well.</p> <p>EM highlighted wider work that she has been involved in since the last meeting – leading the set up of an EDI committee for HISA which she will chair – and completing work with the HISA Advice Manager on a student code of conduct for HISA. EM was thanked for her work in this space.</p>
5.4 Operations	<p>WD noted the work of her Deputy, NH, on developing the HISA Employee Forum which would launch soon to staff. WD highlighted thanks to MC for her work in the finance space. Work is also underway in streamlining the HISA risk register.</p>
6. Finance	
6.1 Budget Updates Reforecast Plan	<p>The RF1 re-forecast plan was highlighted. The Board was happy with the RF1 position but then discussed whether some of the reserves and underspend could be used for strategic one-off projects. WD will review the position.</p> <p>DECISIONS: It was agreed that WD would review spend to see if any funds could be released for projects or to help fund clubs and socs</p>
6.2 22/23 Audit	<p>WD summarised the findings of the financial audit which had much fewer queries than in 21/22 and only 3 main areas highlighted for improvement. The 22/23 audit was praised and approved by the Trustee Board. Thanks were given to WD and MC for their work on the audit.</p> <p>DECISIONS: The Trustee Board approved the 22/23 audit</p>
6.3 Real Living Wage Increase	<p>WD stated that this paper had already been discussed at the FCDC sub-committee and that option 3 had been approved which provides all staff with a 5.9% pay increase equivalent to the increase in the Real Living Wage (RLW) which is being implemented in April. This increase will enable HISA to formally apply to become a RLW accredited employer alongside keeping all salaries in proportion to each other.</p> <p>DECISIONS: The Trustee Board discussed the options and approved option 3.</p>
7. Any Other Competent Business	
7.1 Sub-committees of the Board	<p>JH asked for clarity on the use of emails to confirm sub-committee decisions when the meeting is not quorate. Following a discussion it was agreed that this was normal practice and acceptable.</p>
8. Reserved Business	

8.1 NUS Scotland conference	WC highlighted some significant issues to the Board that he and other attendees had experience at the recent NUS Scotland conference in terms of accessibility, dietary requirements, tone and content. As a result, he will be writing officially to NUS Scotland to highlight these concerns. Issues are being raised by several other SUs across Scotland.
8.2 Block Grant	The draft Block Grant paper was discussed and comments made for the CEO to consider. It was noted that these conversations would take place in a difficult financial context for UHI.