

Committee	Board of Management		
Date paper prepared	13/12/2024	Date of committee meeting	15/01/2025
Subject	Principal's Report		
Author	Jane Lewis, Principal with members of SMG		
Action requested	For discussion		
Purpose of the paper	<p>To update the board on activities across the College. These contribute to our fulfilment of the Regional Outcome Agreement*. The Regional Outcome Agreement covers aspirations around: Fair access and transitions; High quality learning, teaching and support; Partnership participation and student experience; learning with impact; equalities and inclusion; Responsive institutions; Climate emergency; Knowledge exchange and innovation; Research excellence and sustainability.</p> <p>Outcomes for students include our targets for FE credits; our UG and PG targets and our Schools delivery. It also highlights work on fair access; articulation and work with care experienced students.</p> <p>Outcomes for economic delivery and social renewal includes responding to employer and industry needs for example through upskilling and reskilling the workforce. It also includes our work on Islands Deal projects and knowledge exchange</p> <p>Outcomes for research includes our work to maintain and increase research excellence</p>		
Brief summary of the paper	<p>UHI context is updated. The current position on student numbers and credits is provided. Activities of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing committee are provided. An update is given on activity related to the Islands Deal. Updates are given on research activities and other college activities and achievements.</p>		
Consultation	SMG members provide the material included in the report		
Resource implications	n/a		
Risk implications	n/a		
Link with strategy	Links to all parts of the college strategic plan		
<u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</u>	n/a		
Island Community Impact	n/a		

Paper status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open – The paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction. <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted – The paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential - The paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online. [Please note papers may still be subject to Freedom of Information requests – see below].
Freedom of information	Choose an item. If closed/ withheld, select date this will become 'open': Enter a date.

1. UHI Updates

Appointment of Professor Brian Williams as Deputy Principal (Academic and Research). Brian stepped up to this role on an interim basis shortly after Professor Neil Simco's retirement. Joining the university just over three years ago, he has brought with him over 30 years of experience in higher education.

Dr Karen Lowing to join as Associate Dean for Education in March. Dr Lowing comes to us from the University of Hull and will step into the role previously held by Professor Morag Redford, who retired on 31 December after a decade of exceptional leadership in teacher education and the broader education sector.

Professor David Worthington will continue in his interim role as Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, Business and Education until the end of March 2025.

Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary

Sheena Stewart, University Secretary, retired at the end of December and the roles of Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary have been merged into a single role, with an amended remit. **Lorna Walker** (currently Vice-Principal Strategy and Chief Operating Officer) will assume this new and pivotal role, reporting to both the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, and University Court from Wednesday 1 January 2025.

Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary

- **John Maher: Director of Physical and Digital Infrastructure** now including health and safety in this remit.
- **Roger Sendall: Deputy University Secretary** - focused on governance and supporting Court
- **New role - Michael Boylan appointed as Director of Strategy, People and Culture.** Joining the university just over a year and a half ago, Michael has brought over 20 years of experience in operational delivery, human resources and organisational development.

Appointments in recruitment:

Vice-Principal, Student Recruitment and Growth – new role

Director of Economic Development and Advancement – to replace Alison Wilson who is leaving

2. Update on enrolment figures (FE/HE)

		19/12/24	11/12/23	Enrolments		
				2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
FE	Full time (FT)	103	91	87	58	72
	Part time (PT)	1102	1244	2191	2476	2585
HE	Full time (FT)	99	125	120	140	128

Part time (PT)	138	205	242	234	276
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UHI Shetland enrolments at 19/12/2024 (data extracted from Metis)

Enrolment numbers for FE full time courses are particularly strong this year, with part time figures also looking positive. It is encouraging to see continued demand for our local provision; however, we are carefully considering our curriculum offer for AY 25/26 due to the ongoing constraints of our credit target. Our target for AY 2024-25 which remains at 3902, despite requests for this to be increased.

Total credit figures				
19/12/2024	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
3428	4890	4707	4359	4337

Despite mitigations that we have put in place to minimise credit funded courses, it is very likely that we will once again exceed our credit target, having overdelivered by around 25% in 23/24.

Our HE full time enrolment figures are disappointing. We will be marketing standalone HE modules for early 2025 in an attempt to bolster the FTE numbers, however, it is almost certain that we will achieve a lower number of FTEs than in AY 2023/24. Our HE undergraduate 'home fee status' FTE target is lower this year at 126 as opposed to 140 so we hope that we can at least meet this projection.

3. Update on Short Courses

Eventbrite is now live and will be promoted from January onwards, with the Registry and Marketing working together to ensure that there is a new and quicker way to allow people to book onto commercial courses.

4. New Courses

Health, Care and Society

- Senior Phase – Access to Allied Health Professions

Marine Science

- RYA Advanced Powerboat course

Approved

- RYA First Aid at Sea – staff completed RYA instructor training and will be approved to start delivering the course
- CPD Sustainable Aquaculture Management – start Jan 25
- CPD Sustainable Marine Environmental Management – start April 25
- CBQ L5 & L5 approved to replace existing SVQ L2 & L3 aquaculture – start Jan 25

5. Update on Apprentices

As per SDS period data ending November 2024, we had undertaken 120 starts. We currently have 287 apprentices in training and have an achievement rate of 88.7% which is above the sector

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average (69%) and above the SDS target 75%. There is a separate target for 16-19 year olds (70%) and we are currently at 87.5% for this group.

We are asked to review our uptake for priority candidates – care experienced, male-to-female ratio and ethnicity. The data shows that we have only 0.8% of people who are care experienced and 1.5% who identify as non-white, though this is in keeping with Shetland demography. It is also beholden on the employers to select their apprentices and not something we have influence over. Moreover, there are more males to females taking on apprenticeships here with 76.1% of all apprentices and 88.5% of new starts. To help address this, we held the latest iteration of our Try Something Different Day initiative in partnership with SDS and DYW, where school pupils are given the opportunity to try an occupation that is dominated by a particular gender, the reverse to how they identify. The take-up this year was disappointing with only 4 candidates choosing to take part.

We are working with DYW, schools and SDS to plan the next Careers and Opportunities Fair in February 2025.

6. Update on Research

a) Marine Sciences

Project Updates

- Plankton Projects (**Aqua-Plankton, Plankton-Predict**) – IFCB intensive maintenance and redeployment, OptiCAL refurbishment and redeployment, procurement of winch progressed, setup of AML CTD sensor and deployment.
- FLARE – fluorescence microscopy of sea lice nauplii (application to AIEF, led by SAMS).

Publications

- Lieber, L., Fraser, S., Coles D., and Nimmo-Smith, W.A.M., 2024. Sheared turbulent flows and wake dynamics of an idled floating tidal turbine. *Nature Communications*. 15:8244. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-52578-x>
- Riley, T., Mouat, B., Shucksmith, R. (2024) Real world data for real world problems: Importance of appropriate spatial resolution modelling to inform decision makers in marine management. *Ecological Modelling* 498(6)
- Riley, T. G (2024). Fair Isle Benthic Survey 2024 – Cruise Report. UHI Shetland report. P10.

Key Meetings

- Aquaculture Hub
 - A3 Conference, Inverness – Steering Group and conference
 - A3 ISSILG
 - MASTS Sustainable Aquaculture Forum
 - ASSG Annual Conference
 - Shellfish Challenges Workshop

b) Centre for Island Creativity

Publications

- Chapter 'A parallel naming voyage through a familiar landscape' in *History Maker: Essays in honour of Brian Smith* (Shetland Times)
- Carden, S. 2024. 'Mapping our Landscapes of Practice: Visualising Situated Learning for Social Art Practitioners'. In Jokela T., Huhmarniemi M., Beer R. and Soloviova A. (Eds.)

Mapping the New Genre Arctic Art Education. Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design, University of the Arctic. 142-145. This publication includes images of work by 3 of our MA Art and Social Practice students.

Key Meetings

- 08/11 **Faroese Shetland Research Symposium** - <https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/research-enterprise/cultural/institute-for-northern-studies/events/fsrs---the-legacy-of-gudrun-sigurdardottir-in-husavik-and-the-legal-situation-in-the-faroes-in-the-14th-century.html>
- 07/11 **Islands Matter webinar** - <https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/research-enterprise/cultural/institute-for-northern-studies/events/islands-matters---hebridean-educational-research-methods.html>
- 21/10 **Meeting with University of Malta to discuss island teacher training in research methods** online workshop
- **Leverhulme Research Centre – Infrastructure as Culture**
Roxanne Permar/Siun Carden attended a number of meetings in September and October with partners (Birmingham City University, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, University of Leeds, University of Lincoln, Queen Margaret University) in relation to the application for this new research centre following our Expression of Interest being short-listed for this £10 million, 10-year project.
- **Nord Universitet Nesna / University of Lapland**, 29, 30, 31 October and 1 November - three researchers travelled from Nesna, Norway to meet to work on development and writing for a funding application to the University of the Arctic for a newly revised project that builds on Island Power and incorporates the Landscape in Pain work. Partners from SIC joined this workshop. At a subsequent meeting two researchers at University of Lapland explored becoming third university in the funding application.
- **Relate North 2024 research symposium**, investigating the theme New Genre Arctic Art and Design Education in the thematic strand - New Materialism, Entanglements and Intra-disciplinary Dialogues in Art Education. Roxanne Permar participated and a PhD student and one alumna presented in this section. Two of our alumni also participated in the symposium and exhibited their work.
- **Looking back at Home and Belonging** – various activities including - #ShetlandCrew launch of zine collection at Gaada artist's workshop. 19/08/24; Meids board meeting, with Care Inspectorate visitors in attendance, carrying out their Thematic Review of support for care experienced young people in Scotland. Through Care/After Care. SIC Housing meeting.

7. Update on merger related topics

I am pleased to report the signing of two data sharing agreements with Shetland Islands Council to cover our Schools provision and our work with the Eric Gray Centre.

We continue our liaison meetings with SIC and are looking at a partnership agreement rather than an MOU.

8. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

HR & OD lead is now chairing the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

First Aid courses are now running again at the college and our First Aiders are having their certificates refreshed where required.

Responsibility for the maintenance and H&S of the vessels now falls under the Head of Facilities. All the boat policies and procedures have now been reviewed and updated in cooperation with the skipper and other stakeholders.

D block lift was out of action for several weeks. An engineer from the mainland and a replacement part was required. There were a few students and staff that found the lack of a lift difficult for various reasons, and we put in place individual work arounds to assist them and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP).

We have had one spell of snow and frost, and the gritting and clearing of paths was successful in both campuses.

The Lerwick campus fire alarm is now tested at 1.15 each Friday. The change was necessary due to the new Janitors working hours.

The canteen is back up and running fully.

The Lerwick campus PAT testing schedule is on track.

The Peninsula external H&S audit is scheduled for the 14th of January with the auditor visiting both campuses throughout the day.

9. Islands Deal

- **Campus redevelopment** work progresses towards FBC. We still await planning permission for the Port Arthur House work.
- **Shell-volution** – FBC signed off and initial appointments underway
- **Talented** FBC signed off and project getting underway
- **Creative Islands and Wellbeing** – FBC still under review

10. General activities and achievements

Eleanor Hutcheon helped organise a successful Science Fair for school students in Shetland, a 2-day event in November. Various staff members contributed to this event and specialist activities were supported by a Royal Society of Biology Grant. The purpose of the event was to bring STEM learning all under one roof to over 300 S1-3 pupils across Shetland. UHI Shetland staff delivered informative STEM activities such as 'Workshop in eDNA and the Virtual Reality Aquaculture Simulator. The eDNA activity was funded through a successful grant application to the Royal Society of Biology. The Royal Society were keen to support the youngsters learning how DNA analysis contributes to biodiversity research and conservation efforts. Pupils were able to explore molecular techniques and extract their own DNA using commercially available Bio-Rad Genes in a Bottle kits. They then learned about the processes involved in amplifying DNA and explore the usefulness of DNA sequencing in the context of environmental DNA (eDNA) for species detection and classification with resources available to take home.

In December two student graduation ceremonies held for a variety of students – approximately 130 students graduating. Stuart Hannay from Health, Care and Society was the Mace Bearer, former Director of Children's Services at the SIC Helen Budge was the invited speaker, Keith Massey UHI Shetland Student of the Year addressed the students, and Graeme Howell, outgoing Vice Chair of the Board of Management completed the closing address. This was a popular event, and generated press interest for the successful students.

[UHI students celebrate graduation | Shetland News](#)

On 12th December UHI Shetland hosted a 'Business Breakfast' which was promoted through Business Gateway, media and social media. Economic Development from the SIC and SDS also presented information about their support for local businesses. The same day we also hosted a Fishing Industry event on December 12th with the Shetland Fisherman's Association.

11. Student achievement

Creative communities

Creative students at Mareel hosted their *Student Night 2024* – a super range of talent and diversity showcased. The students followed that up with a live lunchtime performance at Briggistanes.

Student Experience

Student placement Counsellor position (HND students only) is being offered again for semester 2.

Marine Science

- 9 MA aquaculture students nominated for ALBAS 2025 awards
- 17 MA aquaculture students achieved their qualification Q2, 20 new enrolments, total of 113 in progress

Health, Care and Society

- 34 SVQ student have completed between September and December 2024.
- 26 new SVQ student have started their awards between September and December 2024.

a. Staff achievement

Health, Care and Society

- Ritchie Summers awarded Programme Leader for HNC Childhood Practice
- Ritchie Summers awarded Module Leader for SCQF9 module 'Leading Change'
- Elsbeth Stewart awarded Module Leader for SCQF9 module 'Health People, Healthy Places'
- Elsbeth Stewart awarded Module Leader for SCQF9 module 'Leading and Managing Communication Systems'

Student experience

- 2 new staff members joined: Tammi Rathore, Student Guidance Officer, Julie Graham Student Engagement Officer.
- Successful visit to Norway from Eleanor Hutcheon – STEM coordinator – regarding Seafish project.

Marine Science

- SS, SF, GT completed Advanced Powerboat course
- JM completed RYA First aid at sea instructor training
- New PhD student Elinor Spencer has started in Marine Sciences, supervised by Dr Rebecca Giesler
- Katie Brigden attended ICES training course 'Survey estimation and data analyses with StoX using ICES Trawl acoustic database' in November
- Saro attended VR training in Norway
- Enrolled MOWI staff from two marine hatcheries in Anglesey on MA in Aquaculture courses

- Riley, T., Mouat, B., Shucksmith, R. (2024) Real world data for real world problems: Importance of appropriate spatial resolution modelling to inform decision makers in marine management. MASTS ASM November 2024, Glasgow.
- Emily Hague has started with the Marine Planning team as a researcher on the EU Blue Connect Project.
- Shaun Fraser BBC news coverage following skate “attack”, November 2024.
- Shaun Fraser participation in Rockall Haddock Survey, trawl survey following semi-random stratified design over four depth-bounded sampling strata to a maximum depth of 350 m with CTD deployments at selected stations. October 2024.
- Shaun Fraser invited participation at Fisheries Innovation and Sustainability joint meeting of the board and stakeholder committee, Fishmongers’ Hall, London. December 2024.
- Phase 5 of Smartrawl field trials commenced, integrated system undergoing testing using Atlantia II.
- In December there are a series of pelagic meetings being held, providing feedback and updates to relevant stakeholders and collaborators, where Katie Brigden will present:
 - 11th Dec: Shetland Fishermen’s Association Pelagic Sub Committee and Shetland Fish Producers Organization Pelagic Advisory Committee
 - 16th Dec: SPFA Senior Scientist and skipper meetings
 - 17th Dec: Annual Scottish Pelagic Industry-Science Data Collection Programme Annual Meeting (with industry and Marine Directorate)
 - 18th Dec: Scottish Pelagic Fishermen’s Association board meeting

Creative communities

Congratulations to Nicola Naismith, Lecturer on the MA Art and Social Practice programme, who has been awarded Arts and Humanities Research Council funding via the North West Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership to undertake part-time PhD study at the University of Manchester.