

<b>Committee</b>	Board of Management		
<b>Date paper prepared</b>	01/02/2022	<b>Date of committee meeting</b>	09/02/2022
<b>Subject</b>	Principal's Report		
<b>Author</b>	Jane Lewis, Principal with members of SMG		
<b>Action requested</b>	For discussion		
<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	To update the board on activities across the College		
<b>Brief summary of the paper</b>	An outline is given of the measures being taken to mitigate COVID whilst ensuring a suitable student experience. 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.		
<b>Consultation</b>	SMG members provide the updates in the report		
<b>Resource implications</b>	n/a		
<b>Risk implications</b>	n/a		

<b>Link with strategy</b>	Links to all parts of the college strategic plan
<a href="#">Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</a>	n/a
<b>Island Community Impact</b>	n/a
<b>Paper status</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Open</b> – The paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Restricted</b> – The paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Confidential</b> - The paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online.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].
<a href="#">Freedom of information</a>	Choose an item. If closed/ withheld, select date this will become 'open': Enter a date.

## 1. UHI changes

Dr Jen Vanderhoven has been appointed as the university's Vice-Principal Engagement. Dr Vanderhoven will lead on the university's strategic goal to engage with our communities and to strive for mutual benefit. Dr Vanderhoven joins from Teesside University where she is currently the Director of the [National Horizons Centre](#) leading its development as a national centre of excellence for the life sciences sector, representing the centre nationally and globally.

Vicki Nairn has been appointed as Vice-Principal Operations and will lead on the design, development and service delivery of the university's professional services which support both the academic and corporate areas, and the management of strategic change programmes. Vicki joins from Robert Gordon University where she is currently [vice principal corporate operations](#),

Consultation is underway on the proposed merger of Lews Castle College UHI/North Highland College UHI/West Highland College UHI. The team articulate a once in a generation opportunity to bring together their three organisations to form a new institution based on a partnership of equals which will develop a single organisation of scale that can fuel economic growth and renewal in a unique way for our region.

The Consultation Document, which is also being made available in Gaelic, is part of a dedicated merger website at <https://www.rural-islands-merger.uhi.ac.uk>

## 2. Return to campus

No outbreaks of Covid despite high levels of infection across Shetland. Staff and students are isolating as and when needed, but with few on site has meant that we have not had any contact from Track and Trace. Safety measures of 1m distancing and face coverings still in place.

Forthcoming Covid group meeting scheduled for Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February to discuss future plans. Looking ahead to reducing distancing as per Colleges Scotland discussions, however, awaiting government advice. In the meantime using a risk-based approach to opening up college activities and maintaining precautions to keep college community safe.

## 3. Update on enrolment figures (FE/HE)

		28/1/2022	Total AY enrolment figures			
			2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
FE	Full time (FT)	<b>72</b>	76	90	94	89
	Part time (PT)	<b>1430</b>	2235	2197	3348	3584
HE	Full time (FT)	<b>131</b>	163	117	112	117
	Part time (PT)	<b>232</b>	255	254	278	220

*Shetland UHI enrolments at 28/1/2022 (data extracted from Metis)*

Full time FE course enrolments have not altered significantly since the last report and the current figure is expected to remain constant. Numbers are only marginally reduced from 2020/21, however

they are around 20% less than average pre-pandemic FT FE enrolments. This continuing decline in FT FE student numbers is a trend that is being seen across Scotland's colleges.

HE full time figures have risen, but we do not expect any further increase. The current figure is significantly lower than last year, when colleges nationally saw a large increase in HE students due to pandemic related uncertainty. However, our current figure remains substantially higher than our average HE FT enrolments pre-pandemic, but, considering emerging trends across the partnership, there is a high likelihood that we may see numbers return to a lower-level next year.

Part time FE and HE enrolments have risen slowly, and it is expected that this trend will continue. However, we had hoped to be somewhat closer to our target numbers by this point in the academic year. COVID restrictions have continued to impact on student numbers, with class capacity being reduced, certain courses postponed due to restrictions and some students being reluctant to embark on courses without certainty on the proportion of in person teaching.

Our latest credit monitoring report shows that we currently have a further 1315 credits to achieve to meet our credit target: the target being higher than in AY 2020/21. Unlike most partners, we depend heavily on part time student enrolments throughout the year to achieve credits, nonetheless, if the prediction is based on last year's figures for semester two, we could fall around 500 credits short of our target.

We continue to take action to minimise the shortfall and have had recent successes with new courses. We are reviewing our existing offer to make it more modern, efficient, and attractive, and increased cross campus and partnership working within UHI is offering new opportunities for growth. Our school partnership vocational pathways programmes remain popular and achieve high attainment rates and at the end of December, we had started 63 modern apprentices from a target of 94.

### 3. Update on Short Courses

Demand for industry mandated short courses has been sustained in the first part of the year, with many individuals seeking courses that were postponed during restrictions, and almost all these courses running at maximum capacity. We remain restricted in some areas by instructor availability and qualifications but are working to narrow this training gap and develop new courses where appropriate.

	<u>No. of courses</u>		<u>No. of delegate places filled</u>		<u>No. of days of training</u>	
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Scalloway	78	14	547	117	141.5	22.5
Lerwick	35	30	253	176	44.5	40.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>63</b>

*Short course numbers at 18/1/2022*

### 4. Update on research

#### 4.1 Marine Science and Technology

##### 4.1.2 Marine Planning

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## Projects

*Diverse values*- we have had to re-advertise the Post-doc position but have now received suitable applications and will be interviewing in February.

*Shetland Marine plan*- there have been delays in Marine Scotland seeking legal advice on the need to update the Direction from NAFC to Shetland UHI and this will result in delays for the adoption of the Shetland Marine Plan (adopted by SIC in April last year). It is expected that these delays will exceed 2 years by the time the Plan is adopted (it is meant to be a 3 year process).

## Students

*Bryden Centre*- Inne Withouck has extended her PhD by 3 months (funded) and intends to submit by the end of March. Bryden Centre funding will be utilised to support a post-doc for 6 months. In this time she will further develop aspects of the PhD, to the benefit of Shetland and the Shetland marine plan, and also publish her PhD. It is expected that her PhD will lead to 3 peer-reviewed publications.

*PhD Funding* – we have successfully received funding for a 3.5 year PhD examining methods to determine harbour porpoise abundance, we have received a lot of interest in the PhD and applications close on 31<sup>st</sup> January. This is funded via the SUPER doctoral training school, and SAMs, Heriot Watt, Marine Scotland and Nature Scot are also partners.

**Publications**- we have published two reports which can be accessed via our website: [Shetland Coastal Character Assessment 2<sup>nd</sup> edition](#), and a report on the value of the [Shetland marine environment to communities](#), Rachel Shucksmith has also published a peer-reviewed paper relating to the [biosecurity plan](#).

**Presentations**- In December Rachel was asked to appear as an expert witness to the Rural Islands and Natural Environment Committee- Scottish Parliament. She also been asked to provide evidence at: Scottish Parliament Committee on Local Government, Housing and Planning - Providing evidence on themes within NPF4 in February, and to present at the East Grampian Coastal Partnership meeting on marine planning in March.

**Events**- Kathryn Allan is organizing a series of events for the community wildlife group, the next is Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> Feb at Carnegie Hall Richard Ashbee. She is also organizing and applying for an event at Sumburgh lighthouse (in collaboration with SAT, RSPB and Shetland library) in June for European Maritime Day (if successful the event will be promoted as part of the wider events for EMD).

**Other**- Kathryn continues to do well in her MBA (Environment), she gained a distinction on her last taught module and has now started her last taught module. The MBA comprises 6 taught modules and a project.

Rachel Shucksmith has submitted her PhD via publication and is awaiting her Viva.

Becky Giesler- we have recently welcomed Becky to the section and she will be working on the implementation plan.

### 4.1.3 Fisheries

## Policy

Dr Ian Napier has focussed on continuing to provide a variety of expert advice, information and other services to the Shetland Fishermen's Association and other local fisheries organisations.

A new Memorandum of Understanding between Shetland UHI and the SFA covering the provision of these services has been agreed.

### **Pelagic**

From Jan 2022 the co-sampling aspect of the Scottish Pelagic Data Collection Programme (formed under the PANDORA Project) replaces onshore factory sampling (directed by MSS as part of national data collection). Co-sampling will provide the main source of biological data for landings of pelagic fish by the Scottish fleet provided to ICES. The work is a collaboration between SUHI, SPFA and MSS, with SUHI taking a lead role.

Jan 2022: The EU FLAG funded project 'Identification of herring in Shetland waters' had initial results back from the genetic analysis which shows the presence of spring spawning fish around Shetland. This is of interest to science and industry, providing information regarding potential unknown and unaccounted for stock distribution. Dr Katie Brigden presented preliminary findings to the ICES Working Group of International Pelagic Surveys (26<sup>th</sup> Jan) and is investigating the potential for further work and collaboration with other organisations. Work on the project is on-going.

9<sup>TH</sup> Dec 2021: Annual self-sampling meeting. Presentation to pelagic industry RE the latest on the Scottish Pelagic Data Collection Programme and future plans.

Nov/Dec 2021: Discussions with SPFA regarding further collaboration through the Scottish Pelagic Data Collection Programme to contribute to the EU LIFE project on bycatch.

### **Whitefish**

Work started and ongoing on Phase 4 of SmarTrawl project, led by Aberdeen University, involving system integration and testing at sea with Atlantia II.

Preparatory work underway for seal tagging project with SMRU commencing 8<sup>th</sup> February and involving Moder Dy charter.

Dr Shaun Fraser is lead author on paper submitted to *Frontiers in Marine Science* following SUPERGEN project at Bluemull "Practical Approaches for Providing Empirical Data on Seabird Behavior and Prey Assemblages in Tidal Channels", and on two reports released, "Overview of annual Shetland Inshore Fish Survey (SIFS) data (2011 - 2021): catch rates and size compositions of commercial demersal fish species" and "Development and reassessment of the cod escape panel concept with adjustments and modifications to improve gear stability".

He is also co-author in paper accepted to *Ecosphere* "Tidal streams, fish and seabirds: understanding the linkages between mobile predators, prey and hydrodynamics", and co-supervisor to Mia McAllister who is currently working on her honours thesis at Edinburgh University looking at common skate data from Inshore Fish Survey.

Our two new research assistants, Sarah Ayres and Angharad Powell, are learning quickly and have settled in well.

### **Shellfish**

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The annual stock assessment is underway with new staff members being supported in a wide range of training to enable them to undertake this work.

We held a meeting with the Marine Stewardship Council who are returning in summer to undertake some promotional work around the Shetland Scallop fishery.

Close working with the SSMO continues, including supporting the new Inshore Co-ordinator and preparing for the upcoming MSC Audit.

Financial and operational information has been provided to the SIC as part of a review of the funding provided to support the SSMO which includes that which comes to Shetland UHI to undertake scientific support and research. There is a proposed move away from annual applications to the Development Department with an indication that a move towards a 5 year funding offer may be appropriate.

#### 4.1.4 Aquaculture

Imaging Flow Cytobot - Our instrument has shipped and is due imminently. Exploring deployment options for initial testing (probably Brindister).

Crown Estate Scotland application with Marine Scotland and SAMS moved to Stage 2 – this is to support IFCB initial testing and data interrogation

Interviews for replacement PhD candidate on 31 January

Shell-volution - OBC submitted, we are to expect multiple rounds of feedback, first of which is due in next couple weeks

PRIMROSE-2 - Notification from Interreg has been delayed but should be shortly

History of Aquaculture PhD - we hope to advertise soon, after having main funders confirmed

#### 4.2 Centre for Island Creativity

##### Conferences/events:

- Brodie Castle Illuminated public event, designed by Malcolm Innes and run by National Trust for Scotland at Brodie Castle (throughout November 2021)
- Andrew Jennings gave a talk at a Shetland Space Day for SaxaVord Space Port (6<sup>th</sup> Nov).
- 15/10/2022 Shepherd's Song event led by Taigh Chearsabhagh arts centre in Uist – Siún Carden led a panel with Viveka Velupillai (linguist/Uradale Farm wool, Shetland) and Meg Rodger (Birlinn Yarns, Uist) [The Shepherd's Song - Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum & Arts Centre \(taigh-chearsabhagh.org\)](https://taigh-chearsabhagh.org)

##### Meetings:

- Siun Carden met with external funding consultant about developing a Horizon Europe bid around a pan-Europe network of shepherds, artists and textiles designers (1<sup>st</sup> Dec)
- Malcolm Innes meeting with Siobhan Anderson, Creative Scotland (3<sup>rd</sup> Dec)
- Malcolm Innes and Eddie Naper re. Lightscape 2022 event in Ireland (15<sup>th</sup> Dec)
- Malcolm Innes joined an online meeting of the Museum and Gallery Lighting Committee of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (7<sup>th</sup> Jan). Malcolm is a co-opted member of the US based committee.
- Meeting with Skills Development Scotland in relation to the Creative Islands Wellbeing programme within the Island Growth Deal (26<sup>th</sup> Jan). Further discussions planned.

- Malcolm met with Graeme Howell, Shetland Arts about collaborations with Shetland Arts and Shetland UHI (19<sup>th</sup> Jan).
- Malcolm met with Martin Malcolm from NHS Western Isles, Sandra MacRury UHI and Leigh Mair from UHI to discuss joining a consortium working on a Horizon Europe bid (26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> Jan).

**Project updates – currently underway/submitted applications/planned new project proposals (commercial and research; e.g. KTPs, Innovation Vouchers, etc.):**

- Joint expression of interest, Edinburgh Napier University and Centre for Island Creativity for Interface project (ceramic bottle recycling)
- Malcolm Innes meeting with Graeme Howell of Shetland Arts (29th Nov) to discuss option of Centre for Island Creativity taking lead on the R&D work for The Knab Project (part of the Islands Growth Deal)
- Invite from Prof Anna Leask, Edinburgh Napier University for Malcolm Innes to discuss collaboration with their new Tourism Research Centre (Jan 2022).
- Invite and meeting with Andrew O’Dowd, Edinburgh Napier University (13<sup>th</sup> Dec) to discuss collaborative project to deliver light trail event in Ireland in November 2022.
- Siún Carden: Shepherd’s Song online meetings with members of European network based in Wales, Scotland, Iceland, Denmark, Spain, Serbia, at least fortnightly
- Siún Carden: Fortnightly Festival of Care steering group meetings with assortment of Who Cares? Scotland, Shetland Islands Council, Shetland Recreational Trust, NHS Shetland, Police Scotland, OPEN Peer Education Network
- Siún Carden: Home & Belonging Project - Who Cares? Scotland - contact more than weekly throughout
- Siún Carden: Continual contact with Shetland Museum and Archives (part of Shetland Amenity Trust) to arrange upcoming exhibition and Festival of Care in February (<https://www.whocaresscotland.org/foc22/>)

**Post Project Planning Meetings:**

- 3 sessions run (early Dec) by Malcolm Innes for UHI programme leaders to brief on Brodie Castle Illuminations Event and to discuss potential staff/student contributions to 2022 and 2023 events.

**5. Update on merger related topics**

A Memorandum of Understanding between Shetland UHI and Shetland Islands Council has been drafted and is with SIC for comment. The MoU is designed to form the basis for a mutually supportive partnership and covers:

- Strategic planning
- Business continuity
- Pricing and charges for services
- Workforce development
- Learning journeys
- Learning centres
- Islands Deal

It is anticipated that the next step will be a meeting between the Principal and SIC’s Corporate Management Team in the next 4-6 weeks.



Following sign off of the Recognition and Procedures Agreement at the last Board of Management the Local Negotiating and Consultation Committee has started work. It has met several times to review policy and procedure on reorganisation and initial work linked to the NRPA.

## **6. Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee (H,S&W) and SMG have introduced mandatory training for Manual Handling and Display Screen Equipment (DSE), a new procedure for reporting Accidents, Incidents and Hazards and a Health & Safety Calendar to proactively introduce H,S&W events throughout the year.

The Lerwick campus now has a First Aiders List which will be distributed across campus shortly.

All Lerwick Fire Wardens will be invited to complete Incident Coordinator training in the next few weeks and Scalloway Incident Coordinators will have their training refreshed.

There was a potential fire incident reported at the Lerwick campus. Due to human error, a ventilator had been switched off while the Kiln was on in the evening overheating the room to a dangerous level and setting off the fire alarm. An evening cleaner called the fire brigade. To avoid this re-occurring the configuration of the switches now ensures the kiln cannot be on without the ventilator.

ADT have been contracted to undertake statutory fire alarm maintenance. The Main building in Lerwick's fire alarm will also be added to an external call centre system to bring it in line with the Scalloway Campus systems.

Sound levels were measured in the construction machine room area and found to be at levels constantly exceeding 85db. Technician confirmed that no person is allowed to enter this area without ear protection. Warning posters were supplied for entrances.

One minor accident reported in Scalloway campus involving a member of staff cutting their thumb on a drill bit.

One potential Manual Handling injury was investigated in Lerwick campus. Managers were unclear how to report the issue, causing delay. However, mitigations have now been put in place to prevent Manual Handling injury and all members of staff have been asked to complete mandatory Manual Handling training. The new Accident, Incident and Hazard procedure should also help make reporting more efficient once its circulated.

No new open hazards to report.

12 of the 32 actions remain open from the Peninsula External H&S Audit of the Lerwick campus but we plan to focus on closing those over the next 2 months.

We continue to progress with scoping a Wellbeing Policy for Shetland UHI that aligns with our strategic aim and links to our policies on related matters. To date, discussions have focussed on mental health awareness, support for employees with existing or long-term mental health conditions or who are experiencing overwhelm, stress and are at risk of burnout. We have also commenced research in to training and development needs and opportunities for our staff and have identified some options to meet those needs and facilitate that development. Our next steps will be to capture these discussions in to a policy and approach; prepare an options appraisal for counselling and staff support models; and, confirm staff training and development opportunities.

## 7. Islands Deal

Islands Deal activity continues at pace with outline business cases being completed, reviewed and submitted to government and feedback incorporated (see table below). UHI programme board has been meeting regularly to oversee projects with which we are engaged and additional resource for management of the Islands Deal has been identified and will come on stream soon. The new VP Operations will be taking over Chairing this group.

Project	SUHI involvement	Progress
Shetland campus redevelopment	Lead	OBC updated with feedback from SG.
Shellvolution	Joint leadership	OBC submitted to government
Creative Islands and Wellbeing	Lead	OBC feedback from govt received
Talented	UHI Lead	OBC submitted to government

In addition to the projects indicated above we have contributed to discussion and shaping of several other projects within the deal.

## 8. General activities and achievements

Two in person open events were held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November in Lerwick and Scalloway respectively. It was a welcome change to engage with potential students and parents in person and although attendance was modest good contacts were made.

The first staff development day took place on Monday 17 January. The event took place online through Microsoft Teams. The conference opened with a keynote speech from UHI Vice Chancellor, Todd Walker and Shetland UHI Principal, Jane Lewis. The rest of the day was divided into 5 separate training hours. For each hour of training, delegates were asked to choose from up to 5 different options. There was a maximum of 25 delegates per session.

The timing of the event was amended from its traditional pre-Christmas slot. The training sessions were delivered by a mixture of existing staff and external speakers. Staff were sent an online questionnaire to complete to evaluate the training day and to ask how helpful they found it. From the survey, we had a 56% response rate. Respondents were asked to rate the day on a 1-5 scale with 5 being the most useful. 87.4% of respondents gave the day a score of 3 or above. As staff had to choose between options, they were asked if they would welcome sessions being repeated and the most common requests for repeat sessions were for Tech Tips, SharePoint, Adobe, Breathe and Mental Health. Given that this has occurred over during a period when we are reliant on technology for home learning, the fact that requests for systems and IT sessions are perhaps not surprising, along with the focus on Mental Health. Interestingly 87.5% of participants would welcome a mixture of online and in-person for the next session in June.

Staff were re asked what they would like to include in the next session in June. There are some specific requests including asking for support with technical matters and developing teaching resources. Other comments including development time for departments, more information on the direction of Shetland UHI and bringing people together. There were some positive comments on how the event was organised.

Staff were then given a space to pass any further comments on the event. Some staff commented on the length of sessions as they were online, although some extolled the benefits and flexibility of online. Some commented they would have liked to attend other sessions but that there were conflicts. There were some comments about some staff not finding classes that were relevant to

their roles and wanting to have some in-person sessions however there were some complimentary comments about individual sessions. Overall, the feedback was quite positive and helpful for planning the next session. An initial planning meeting has already been scheduled to this effect.

## 7.1 Student achievement

**Student prizegiving – virtual ceremony** - <https://www.shetland.uhi.ac.uk/news/prizes-for-shetland-uhi-students.html>

Thirty-three students have been awarded prizes by Shetland UHI in recognition of their achievements during the last two academic years. Due to the ongoing Covid restrictions it had not been possible to hold in-person prize giving events, so the prizes were awarded in an online ceremony. The awards spanned a range of subjects which included: computing, hospitality, business, construction, english speakers of other languages, creative industries, engineering, aquaculture, fishing, engineering and navigation.

Ceremony film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfms4Lh7mII&t=962s>

### External awards

One of our Accounting Apprentices, Sarah Sandison, is a Finalist in the Scottish Apprenticeship Awards for 2022 which will take place in Modern Apprenticeship Week in March.

Three Shetland UHI Aquaculture students have been named as finalists for Lantra Scotland's Awards for Land-based and Aquaculture Skills (the ALBAS) ([Lantra Scotland announce finalists for ALBAS 22 | Lantra – Scotland](#)).

These students are:

- Derek Ferguson: Technical Apprenticeship in Aquaculture Management with Greig Seafood
- Emmanuelle Rey: Modern Apprenticeship in Aquaculture with Dawnfresh Farming Ltd
- Emily Underhill: Modern Apprenticeship in Aquaculture with Scottish Sea Farms