

University of the Highlands and Islands

Committee Shadow Further Education Regional Board (FERB)/FE Planning Board
Date & Time Tuesday 11 December 2012 at 1.30pm
Location Eden Court, Inverness
Purpose Scheduled meeting
Quorum Half plus one

Present Michael Foxley (Chair) & Lydia WHC
 Rohmer
 Bill Ross & Janice Annal Orkney College (VC)
 Mike Devenney & Jana Hutt Moray College (VC)
 Gordon Jenkins & Niall Smith North Highland College
 Iain MacMillan & Brian Chaplin Lews Castle College (VC)
 Hector Morrison & Murray HTC
 McCheyne
 David Gray NAFC (VC)
 Thomas Moore, Margaret Munckton Perth College
 & Derek Forgan (VC)
 Boyd Robertson Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (VC)
 Michael Gibson SAMS
 John Spencer & Garry Sutherland Inverness College
 Fraser Durie & Andrew Campbell Argyll College
 Katrina Paton & Craig Keys UHISA
 Fraser Grieve SCDI
 Morven Cameron HIE
 Crichton Lang Executive Office
In attendance Judith Henderson & Halena McAnulty SFC
 Roger Sendall (*minutes*)
Apologies Penny Brodie, Roddy John MacLeod

Agenda Item

Action

1 WELCOME

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the representatives from SCDI and HIE. comments.

The Chair reported that he had received an assurance from SG that the top slice figure of 4.8% previously awarded to SDS for 2013/14 would now be returned to the colleges. This had been achieved as a result of serious concerns raised by colleges and by effective lobbying. It was noted that the Board had the opportunity to make Regional bids for available SFC funds understood total £28M. It was noted that the Board intended to make a bid for transitional funding. Regional FE leads meetings are emerging as a key forum for FE in Scotland with strong support from the SG and SFC and Highlands and Islands region would benefit considerably from working together.

2 STATUS & PURPOSE OF MEETING

To consider and discuss the items included on the agenda as circulated in advance of the meeting.

3 REMIT OF REGIONAL BOARD

Members considered paper FERB12-1 comprising draft terms of reference (TOR) and the following key points/concerns were highlighted:

1. The TOR should be kept as a draft document and should not be formally agreed until the Post 16 Education Bill was finalised.
2. Clarity was required to identify the scope and extent of delegated authority from Court. The Working Group report had recommended that the Committee should be “virtually autonomous”.
3. Clause “t” relating to the ability to “require transfer of staff...” should be amended to reflect the position of non-incorporated colleges. Concern was raised about the ability to require action by consent. It was felt that this was not appropriate and that the text of the TOR should exactly reflect the text of the Bill. The clause should be omitted. It was reported that the draft Bill was clear in that all UHI APs required to give consent before such actions were undertaken.
4. There was no definition of “exceptional circumstances”.
5. Meeting frequency should initially follow a two month cycle.
6. The TOR should be amended to permit alternates to attend. Members of the Board were not Directors of the University and members felt that it was appropriate and necessary for members to have the ability to send an appropriate alternate to meetings.
7. Amend “q” line 1 to read “between two or more”
8. Quorum for meetings should be a half plus 1 not one third of membership.
9. Primary duty of the Board was to deliver Further Education not “high quality tertiary education”. Suggested to amend the TOR to say “deliver quality further education contributing to tertiary education”.
10. Some members were concerned that clause “v” relating to attendance at “any meetings of a college” was too great a power. Many meetings such as negotiations with unions and such like should be exempt.
11. Clarification was needed as to who would serve as Secretary to the Court particularly definition of “independent individual”.
12. All reporting appeared to be from the bottom up and TOR should be amended to provide for a two way information flow.
13. The terms of office for the Chair and the appointment process for the chair should be clarified. It was noted that the current Chair was appointed by the Cabinet Secretary for one year (ending Summer 2012). It was understood that the appointment process would then follow Nolan principles.
14. Further comments on the draft TOR should be submitted by email.

4 PROCESS OF APPOINTMENT OF SHADOW BOARD MEMBERS

4.1 Election of Staff Members: It was noted that many staff were involved in HE and FE, however, it was felt that the staff member on the Board should be elected from a pool of staff with an active FE workload.

4.2 Election of Student Member: It was noted that the students representatives present felt strongly that the students be permitted to run the election process themselves. UHISA representatives reported that they had traditionally had difficulty in attracting interest from students and in achieving effective student representation across the partnership. They highlighted the importance of continuity and felt that it may be appropriate for the student representatives on Court to also attend the FE Board rather than trying to find an FE student to represent the partnership. Board members felt that it would be important for the student member to be a current FE student. It was noted that the role of the member needed to be clarified further – were they on the Board to represent all FE students with a duty to communicate issues and information back to students across the region as a sabbatical post or were they on the Board to provide input based on their own experience as an FE student. It was important for the FE Board to determine exactly what was required of the member as this would have a significant bearing on the scope of the position and associated support mechanism. It was noted that the SFC may be willing to assist with improving effective student engagement.

4.3 Local Authority/HIE/SDS members

It was noted that the UHI Secretary had written to the local authority with a view to obtaining executive representation at Director of Education level. The UHI Secretary had also approached SCDI, HIE and SDS.

4.4 Timescales

It was hoped that the shadow Board would be fully populated in time for the next meeting.

5 IMPLICATIONS OF POST 16 EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL

Members felt that the Board must endeavour to work more corporately and it was agreed that there would be merit in submitting a joint response to the consultation on the above Bill, however, it was also noted that individual AP Boards of Management may also wish to submit a response. The Board was a committee of the Court and Court may also wish to submit a view. There was a need to clearly define responsibilities and delegated authority between Court and the Board; also to consider how any differences of opinion between the two bodies would be resolved.

The Board noted that the partnership had much to be proud of with regard to leading the sector on tertiary and inclusive education initiatives and it was felt that greater effort should be made to promote and celebrate these successes.

Any comments on the consultation for a joint response should be sent to the Chair and also to the Principal of Moray College UHI for them to develop a draft response.

6 ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

The Board considered paper FERB12-03. The following points were highlighted:

- Board recommendation to amend the bullet point relating to monthly meeting with Chair of FE Board to include the Principal and Vice Chancellor.
- Request from members for information relating to the composition of the selection panel to be recirculated. Panel to be chaired by Chair of Moray College.
- Panel members should consider if they had a conflict of interest – dependant on application received. For example some members felt that it would be inappropriate for a Chair to consider an application for this post from their own Principal.
- Job description should be amended to reflect the more subtle nature of the post. It was felt that the post holder was not “responsible for all aspects of the delivery of FE”, more that they were in post to provide an overview and to represent the partners, to influence and negotiate and to facilitate the delivery of quality FE.
- Any further comments on the draft job description should be emailed to the SFC representatives before 18th December 2012.

7 IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

Members noted paper “Item 7” prepared by the Principal of Moray College outlining progress made in implementing the 2012/13 Highlands and Islands Outcome Agreement.

8 SFC FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR 2012/14

Members considered paper “Item 8” and agreed that the foregoing price relatives for session 2013/14 should be maintained at 2012/13 levels. The Board noted its support for the NAFC cadet training programme and the hope that a solution would be found to directing appropriate funding for growth in this area. The Chair thanked the Principal of Moray College for and the principals for their work in coming to an agreement.

9 DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2013/14

Members considered paper “Item 9” and agreed to endorse the age distribution of activity for session 2012/13 and indicative allocations by sector as presented within the paper.

10 INTERNAL & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

It was noted that this matter would be considered at he next meeting.

11 ARTICULATION OF FE STUDENTS INTO HE

The Vice Principal (Academic) provided a verbal report on the above subject. The following key messages were highlighted:

- UHI had been fortunate to receive a significant increase in funded numbers from SFC amounting to an additional 2000 heads by 2016. This was a very welcome challenge for the University and increased articulation into HE would be a key element of the growth strategy for education in the region.
- Currently 62% of UHI students were first year students studying at level 7 and considerable opportunity existed for these students to be encouraged to persist with their education and to increase the student population.
- Improving retention was recognised as a key factor for the growth agenda and significant

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focus was being given to improving support services and delivering a quality student experience.

- Numerous opportunities existed for UHI to develop tertiary education through routes such as the NAFC Marine Cadet programme that provided a direct transition from FE to HE.

12 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

It was agreed that a Doodle Poll should be used to identify appropriate meeting dates. Chair to liaise with Corporate Governance Officer over potential dates.

13 PRIORITIES FOR NEXT MEETING

- Improved schools liaison.
- Work with SCDI and HIE on Market Intelligence.
- Consider SDS and HIE skills development plan – (Geographic)
- Suggestions for agenda items should be forwarded to the Chair and the UHI Corporate Governance Officer.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

CLOSED SESSION CHAIRS ONLY

ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL SALARY DISCUSSION

Members felt that the proposed salary level was excessive in relation to AP Principal remuneration. It was noted that the post holder would not have the same level of responsibility as an AP Principal at a large partner college and it was felt that it was inappropriate to set the proposed salary at a level that may lead to wage inflation particularly when most public sector employees were subject to austerity measures. A salary level of £100k was agreed.

The Chair reported that the UHI Principal and Vice Chancellor felt that this senior post would require significant support, however, it was noted that the Chair was keen to keep new support structures to the absolute minimum and for the work of the APFE to be supported and for costs to be absorbed by the APs with no growth at the centre. If colleges needed help/support with administration then they should provide that information for inclusion in the bid for transitional funding.