

University of the Highlands and Islands

Draft Minute

Committee Further Education Regional Board (FERB)/FE Planning Board
Date & Time Monday 17 June 2013 at 1.30pm
Location EO1 Ness Walk, Inverness
Purpose Scheduled meeting
Quorum Further Educational Regional Board (FERB)/FE Planning Board Friday (Half plus one)

Present

Michael Foxley (Chair) & Lydia WHC
 Rohmer (VC)

Bill Ross (p) & Janice Annal (c) Orkney College (VC)

Drew Ratter (c) & Irene Peterson Shetland College
 (p)

Mike Devenney (p) & Jana Hutt (c) Moray College

Gordon Jenkins (p) North Highland College

Iain MacMillan (p) Lews Castle College (VC)

Willie Shannon (p) NAFC (VC)

Ian Mathers (c) Perth College (VC)

Dianne Rawlinson (p) & Garry Inverness College
 Sutherland (c)

Fraser Durie (p) & Andrew Argyll College
 Campbell (c)

Katrina Paton (Pres) & Rachel UHISA
 Parker (Pres- elect)

Carroll Buxton (Director) HIE – In part

Gordon McGuinness SDS

In attendance

Judith Henderson Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
 Halena McAnulty (SFC) (VC) – In part
 Aideen O'Malley (SMO)
 Crichton Lang (Deputy Principal)
 Fiona Larg (UHI Chief Operating Officer & Secretary)
 Martin Wright (UHI EO)
 Roger Sendall (*minutes*)

Apologies

Niall Smith, Ertie Nicholson, Thomas Moore, Penny Brodie, Roddy John MacLeod, Murray McCheyne, Boyd Robertson, Hugh Fraser, Michael Gibson, Fraser Grieve, Hector Morrison

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1 WELCOME</p> <p>The Chairman opened the meeting and noted that a quorum was present.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated Dr Hutt on the award of an MBE in the Her Majesty the Queen's birthday honours. The Chair also welcomed Willie Shannon and Gordon McGuiness to their first FERB meeting.</p> <p>Declarations of interest: None</p> <p>AOCB: None</p>	
<p>2 MINUTES</p> <p>2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2013 (FERB13-019) were reviewed and approved.</p>	
<p>3 MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>3.1 Transitional Funding Bid – It was reported that discussions were continuing with the SFC with regard to obtaining transitional funding to assist with establishing new governance arrangements and to finance the administration and new activities associated with the FERB. It was noted that the SFC had requested further information from the University with regard to projected savings from the Shared Services.</p> <p>3.2 Student Representation Project – It was noted that the bid for project funding from SFC to assist with promoting student engagement in governance had been successful. A grant of £205k had been awarded and some good progress was being made.</p> <p>3.3 Shared Services – It was noted that all APs with the exception of SMO and SAMS had agreed in principle to progress with the Shared Services agenda and agreed to endorse the Fort Augustus 2 agreement. It was noted that a full business plan was being developed and that the project team were working towards a go-live implementation date of 1st April 2014 for shared LIS activity provided by a new Cost Sharing Group (CSG).</p> <p>3.4 Development of Employer Engagement Strategy – FERB was informed that the Higher Education Partnership Planning and Resources Committee (HEPPRC) had considered a draft strategy document at their meeting on 30th May 2013. It was noted that Mike Devenney would liaise with the University's Key Account Director with regard to developing the strategy to encompass FE activity.</p> <p>3.5 EU Structural Funds Update – Mike Devenney reported that he had met with the Director of European & International Development earlier in the day to discuss developing a strategy to take advantage of funding opportunities in accordance with the EU Structural Funds Programme for 2014/20. It was noted that the Director of European & International Development planned to visit APs over the next few weeks with a view to collecting and collating individual and collective aspirations to inform the UHI strategy. It was noted that the topic would be discussed at the FERB strategic session planned for August.</p>	<p>MD</p>

4 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

ONS Reclassification of Colleges - The Chair reported severe concerns in connection with the recent announcement by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) that would see the reclassification of a majority of APs as Government agencies and therefore reduce their ability to retain surpluses for strategic investment.

This change had the potential to severely limit the ability of the FERB to act as the strategic planning body for further education within the region and was contrary to the Scottish Governments (SG) regionalisation agenda. It was noted that discussions were continuing with SG through the Regional Leads forum and independently with regard to identifying an appropriate solution to this problem. In addition a national working group had been established to consider implications for colleges and the Principal of LCC was a member of this group. It was proposed that one potential solution may be for APs to establish Development Trusts, however, it was noted that such structures would significantly reduce the ability of Principals to control and allocate spend as Trusts would need to be wholly independent of the College. It was noted that the reclassification of colleges may also impact upon the charitable status of the colleges and that discussion with OSCR was necessary to clarify the situation and associated implications.

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2013/14 Efficiency Gain - The Chair reported that discussions with SG and SFC were continuing with regard to the extent of the 2013/14 efficiency gain. It was noted that the impact of efficiency savings would be held as an employability fund by SDS. SFC reported that the impact of the efficiency requirement for UHI APs was below the national average and that the UoR provided to colleges in the region was higher than the national average in recognition of the fact that delivery costs were greater than elsewhere in Scotland. It was noted that members of FERB were concerned that resources were being reduced to a point beyond "efficiency savings" and that there was a risk that the funding settlement would impact upon the quality of service delivery, stifle growth of APs and create a genuine risk to the sustainability of some APs. Accordingly, FERB must act to guard against more cuts to FE budgets.

Implications for College Budgets - The Chair reported that the Associate Principal FE would be asked to consider the implications of efficiency savings on individual AP finances and to report to FERB in due course.

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UHI Articles of Association/Post 16 Bill - The Chair noted that the UHI Secretary had circulated the draft new University Articles of Association to APs for comment and that responses would be collated at the end of June. The Chair also advised that several amendments had been proposed in connection with the SG's Post 16 (Scotland) Education Bill, these would be considered by the SG in session on 26th June.

National Pay Bargaining – The Chair reported that SG had advised that this issue should be considered on a regional as opposed to a national basis. It was noted that there were substantial differences between conditions of employment and remuneration between APs and that it would be important to develop a flexible sophisticated solution for the region since it was not considered feasible to uplift all staff to the national average. The situation was further complicated for UHI APs in that mat staff were involved in HE and FE delivery. It was noted that a working group had been established by HEPPR to consider the issue.

Strategic Forum – The Chair encouraged members to respond to a Doodle Poll before 21st June to identify a suitable date for a strategic away day session.

5 **REFORMING THE COLLEGE FUNDING MODEL (DEVELOPMENT OF NEEDS BASED FUNDING)**

FERB considered the following papers;

FERB13-030 "Reforming the College Funding Model"
FERB13-031 "The Contribution of Scotland's Colleges to the Scottish Economy and Society" and
FERB13-032 "Towards a consideration of rural deprivation".

The following key points were highlighted:

- SFC has initiated a debate on moving towards "a simpler method of funding colleges to more closely match the distribution of funding need."
- Regional Leads are developing a paper that seeks to maximise the resources for FE (paper FERB13-031)
- SFC views on how resources might be better shared out on the basis of regional need are subject to discussion within a Funding Group established for the purpose. FERB had some representation on the group already, however, opportunity existed for additional members. It was noted that Gordon Jenkins and Gordon McGuinness would like to join the group.
- FERB members felt that a regional funding price was desirable so long as scope existed for additional elements based on need and circumstance. The region was a complex area and it was not sensible to assume that the cost of delivery of a course for one individual in an urban centre location was equivalent to a remote rural learner. Similarly the cost of running a central hub were wholly different to supporting numerous learning centres and the solution for the region must reflect this.

6 IMPLEMENTATION OF 2012/2013 REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENTS

(Tom McGarry, Jackie Andrews and Suzanne Stewart in attendance)

6.1 Presentations – Regional Schools College Group, Development of Regional Curriculum Map

FERB received presentations from Tom McGarry and Suzanne Stewart with regard to the above.

It was noted that Outcome 12 required a thorough and rigorous mapping exercise to determine the further education map across the region with a view to identifying gaps in provision. In addition Outcome 21 required APs to review the extent and effectiveness of existing school/college activity across the region and to ensure that suitable plans are in place for each of the colleges to play their full part in the senior phase of the Curriculum for Excellence.

The following points were highlighted:

- Most APs were offering similarly named FE programmes, however, there were inconsistencies with the content of individual modules and further analysis was necessary to fully understand the data.
- UHI was currently developing a tertiary curriculum map for SCQF levels 7 to 11 and potential existed to link the processes together to create an extended map including programmes SCQF 4-11 and STEM activity.
- FERB approved a recommendation within paper FERB13-34 to create a small sub-group to report to it by autumn 2013 with proposals for outcomes 44-47. It was noted that two SNLs would join the group also that UHISA should be invited to contribute.

MD

- A meeting was scheduled for early July 2013 for the purposes of developing and agreeing protocols for contacting schools.

7 REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

FERB noted paper FERB13-035 and FERB13-036 comprising the final agreed version of the 2013/14 Outcome Agreement.

8 CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

FERB noted the papers FERB13-037 and FERB13-038 summarising the capital allocations for 2013/14 as agreed by the Further Education Partnership Planning Forum on 30th May 2013.

9 DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2014/15 AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS

FERB considered the papers FERB13-039 and FERB13-040 in connection with the above. It was noted that SFC were interested in working towards a three year agreement. Any comments on the paper were welcomed and these should be forwarded to Jude Henderson at SFC.

It was noted that the Associate Principal FE would work with AP Principals to develop an appropriate forward for the OA reflecting the diversity of the region and setting the context for agreed outcomes.

10 REGIONAL SKILLS INVESTMENT PLAN

FERB received a presentation from Gordon McGuiness in connection with the above subject. A copy of the presentation slides are appended to this minute.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair of Inverness College noted that Court would be asked next week to consider a proposal to progress a multimillion pound facility on the Beechwood campus site. The proposal was to build a Partnership facility with Highlands and Islands Enterprise for research and commercial activity and he was concerned that APs had not been granted appropriate opportunity to discuss the proposals before they were presented to Court for a decision. It was noted that HEPPRC had been granted opportunity to comment on the proposal, however, that they too were disappointed by the lateness of their engagement. FERB agreed that communications and consultation on major projects should be improved and the Chair agreed to raise these concerns with Court.

12 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Next meeting – August 2013 strategic session. Date and venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 16:25 hrs.