

FERB13-010

University of the Highlands and Islands

Draft Minute

Committee Further Education Regional Board (FERB)/FE Planning Board
Date & Time Tuesday 19 February 2013 at 1.00pm
Location EO1 Ness Walk, Inverness
Purpose Scheduled meeting
Quorum Half plus one

Present

Michael Foxley (Chair) & Lydia Rohmer	WHC
Bill Ross (p) & Janice Annal (c)	Orkney College (VC)
Drew Ratter (c) & Irene Peterson (p)	Shetland College
Mike Devenney (p) & Jana Hutt (c)	Moray College
Donald Macbeath (p) & Niall Smith (c)	North Highland College
Iain MacMillan (p) & Brian Chaplin (c)	Lews Castle College (VC)
Hector Morrison (p)	HTC (VC)
David Gray (c)	NAFC (VC)
Thomas Moore (p) & Ian Mathers (c)	Perth College (VC)
David Hosey (p) & Garry Sutherland (c) (in part)	Inverness College
Fraser Durie (p) & John Coulston (c)	Argyll College
Katrina Paton (Pres) & Judith Crowe (Vice Pres)	UHISA (VC)
Fraser Grieve (Manager)	SCDI
Morven Cameron (Head of A R)	HIE
Crichton Lang (Academic Registrar)	Executive Office

In attendance Judith Henderson & Halena McAnulty Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
 Martin Wright
 Roger Sendall (*minutes*)

Apologies Penny Brodie, Roddy John MacLeod, Boyd Robertson, Michael Gibson, Diane Rawlinson, Fiona Larg
 SDS representative

Agenda Item

Action

1 WELCOME

The Chairman opened the meeting and noted that a quorum was present. It was noted that the Scottish Government (SG) had confirmed that the word "shadow" could be dropped from the title of the group.

Declarations of interest: None

AOCB:

i) Current College Reserves – The Chair requested urgent confirmation from APs with regard to their uncommitted financial reserves. It was noted that the data was needed by close of business on 20th February to assist the Chair in ongoing discussions with SG and SFC relating to future

grant funding.

ii) Joint meetings with PPF FE - It as noted that the Chair had requested Principals to attend the meeting today in an effort to provide for a more joined up and inclusive partnership approach. Members agreed that this approach should be continued for future meetings.

2 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2012 (FERB13-001) were reviewed and approved.

2.2 Matters Arising:

Member noted the matters arising paper FERB13-002.

1. It was noted that the FE Board had previously agreed to allow alternate members to attend meetings. The Chair was pleased to note that a number of alternates were in attendance today.

2. It was noted that FERB had not issued a joint response to the Post 16 Education Bill consultation. APs had instead preferred to submit individual responses.

3. The SFC confirmed that they had approved a submission from UHI to assist with developing student representation/engagement structures. It was noted that this work would be progressed over the next 24 months. The UHISA President reported that the Student Council had identified that interim measures were required and that UHISA had agreed to part fund AP student president representation at each AP in the region of 10 hours per week. Further information was available from UHISA.

4. It was agreed the Highlands & Islands Colleges' Principals Group would now become the PPF-FE.

3 MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT (OA) 2012/13

Members considered paper FERB13-003 including a report from the Chair of the Shared Services Project Board.

Progress with implementing Shared Services had been slow and a number of APs had not yet committed to the project. It was noted that the Chair of the Shared Services Project Board planned to convene a meeting of all parties on 15th and 16th April 2013 in an effort to facilitate progress. I.C. thought the primary issue slowing progress down was the lack of a full business plan and a lack of information about associated costs and delivery timescales. The meeting in April would attempt to address such concerns and provide an opportunity for APs to confirm whether or not they wished to be included with the project and formation of a Cost Sharing Group (GSG) as the next stage. The Chair urged all 14 partners to attend. The Scottish Government expects Shared Services.

The Principal of WHC noted that the McClelland Review was considering provision of ICT by Public Authorities across Scotland and wondered whether this initiative would have any implications on the UHI Shared Services project and bids for transitional funding. The representatives for the SFC agreed to provide clarification.

SFC

FERB was pleased to note the progress made to date in implementing the majority of the 2012/13 OA and strongly encouraged AP Chairs and Principals to send empowered members of their staff to attend the proposed Shared Services meeting in April in an effort to facilitate progress on this issue.

4 REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2013/14

Members considered paper FERB13-004 and agreed to approve the three high level priority outcomes identified within the paper for 2013/14 subject to the following:

- Further dialogue was needed with SFC with regard to the required level of efficiency savings. Available data suggests a budget reduction of 5.7% and this was considered to be very high in the context of delivering the required outcomes at a local level.
- AP Boards of Management would be responsible for agreeing final local outcomes, either using delegated powers or at special board meetings.

5 REGIONAL ACTIVITY AND FUNDING 2013/14

Members considered paper FERB13-005. The Chair thanked the Principals of Moray, Orkney and Lews Castle colleges for their efforts to model allocations for 2013/14. It was noted that the modelling had been based on a number of assumptions and to date the data had not been verified by SFC. FERB was pleased to note that the Cabinet Secretary had agreed to return the £18M allocated to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) back to the SFC for distribution as core grant but was concerned that conditions of funding to support pre-employment learning may not be entirely appropriate for UHI Partners given the distinct and distributed nature of the region that made the application of narrow rules and conditions difficult to apply. It was noted that the SFC would welcome an alternative proposal for the region and the Chair requested that Principals should contact him directly to articulate any concerns to enable him to take up the issues with the SFC.

Chair

6 FEEDBACK FROM REGIONAL LEADS MEETING

The Chair reported that the Regional Leads would hold monthly meetings as well as regular meetings with the Cabinet Secretary thereby providing an excellent and direct link to the SG. The group would also hold two strategic forum events each year with representation from across the whole of Scotland. The primary aim for the Chair in attending such meetings should be to develop and enhance awareness across government of the special characteristics and nature of delivering education in such a diverse and distributed region and to maximise funding with minimal conditions. The Chair gave feedback on the options for the additional £23m for Academic Year 13/14 & £37m for Academic Year 14/15.

7 FORMATION OF WORKING GROUP ON TACKLING INEQUALITIES

The Chair suggested that there would be benefit in establishing a small working group to identify and champion the work that was already occurring by the Regional FE leads to provide access to education for disadvantaged communities. It was noted that the partnership had a record of which it could be proud and that work to identify and communicate this joined up tertiary story to stakeholders would be beneficial. It was agreed that the Chair would coordinate this activity and report back to the next meeting.

Deputy
Principal

8 TRANSITIONAL FUNDING

Members considered and agreed the paper FERB13-006. It was noted that UHI planned to make a bid to the SFC for transitional funding before the end of February 2013. Members were encouraged to liaise with the Principal of Moray College at their earliest convenience regarding their requirements and it was noted that the FERBChair and the Principal of Moray College would meet with the Chief operating Officer and Secretary with a view to preparing an appropriate submission.

9 APPOINTMENT OF FE BOARD MEMBERS

The following points were noted:

- Carroll Buxton had agreed to represent HIE.
- Fraser Grieve would represent SCDI.
- SDS would confirm a representative prior to the next meeting.
- 2 applications had been received from Directors of Education of local authorities.
- The Chief Executive for Perth and Kinross had been nominated for appointment to Court (but had since withdrawn).

10 APPOINTMENT OF ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL FE

It was noted that the post had been advertised and that applications had been invited in accordance with a 1st March deadline. The Chair agreed to circulate members with information about the appointment process and panel.

11 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

FERB recognised that the provision of accurate and timely information about changes to the structure and governance arrangements of the partnership needed to be communicated to stakeholders promptly and in a consistent manner across all APs. AP Principals reported dissatisfaction at not being consulted in accordance with recent proposed changes to the Articles of Association of the University.

The Director of Marketing Communications and Planning agreed to provide FERB with a communications plan for approval at the next meeting.

12 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Corporate Governance Officer over to circulate potential dates at two monthly intervals.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None. The meeting closed at 15:15 hrs.

Enter G
Sutherland