

University of the Highlands and Islands

Committee Further Education Regional Board (FERB)
Date & Time Thursday 5th June 2014 at 2.00pm
Location EO1 Ness Walk, Inverness
Purpose Scheduled meeting
Quorum Further Educational Regional Board (FERB)

Present

Michael Foxley (Chair)	WHC
Lydia Rohmer (p)	
Bill Ross (p) & Janice Annal(c/vc)	Orkney College (VC)
Irene Peterson (p)	Shetland College
Peter Campbell (c)	
Niall Smith (c)	North Highland College
Donald MacBeath (p)	
Dianne Rawlinson (p) & Garry Sutherland (c)	Inverness College
Fraser Durie (p), Andrew Campbell (c)	Argyll College
Willie Shannon (p) (VC)	NAFC
Bruce Ritchie (c)	HTC
Rachel Parker (President)	UHISA (VC)
Gordon McGuinness	SDS
Carole Buxton	HIE
Calum Macpherson	Independent Member
Lisa Massie	Independent Member
Mike Devenney	Associate Principal FE

In attendance

Clive Mulholland UHI Principal and Vice Chancellor
 Crichton Lang UHI Deputy Principal
 Neil Simco Acting Deputy Principal
 Martin Wright UHI Director of Marketing Communications and Planning
 Fiona Larg UHI COOS
 Sharon Drysdale SFC
 Linda Stewart in part
 Roger Sendall (*minutes*)

Apologies

Jana Hutt, Anne Lindsay, Brian Chaplin, Iain MacMillan, Penny Brodie, Margaret Munckton, Patrick O'Donnell, Emma Lawrie, Boyd Robertson, Michael Gibson

Agenda Item

Action

1 WELCOME

The Chairman opened the meeting and noted that a quorum was present.

Declarations of interest: None

AOCB: FE Chair Representation on Court

2 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2014 (FERB14-015) were reviewed and approved

subject to minor amendment.

3 MATTERS ARISING

FERB noted the matters arising paper FERB14-016.

3.1 Shared Services

FERB noted paper FERB14-016b providing an update on progress towards establishing UHI Shared Services Ltd by 1st August 2014. The following key points were highlighted:

- A number of APs were awaiting responses from the Shared Services Project Board in relation to requested assurances in connection with identified caveats that would need to be addressed before their Boards of Management would formally commit to the new company. It was noted that most AP Boards of Management would be holding quarterly meetings before the end of June.
- The SFC representative confirmed that promised transitional funding to support the implementation of shared services was available, however, funds would not be released until the SFC had received a copy of the updated business case and confirmation of authorised signatories.

SSPB

3.2 Changes to FE Funding

FERB received a verbal report from the Associate Principal FE. It was noted a sub-group had been established by the FE Executive Board and chaired by the Principal of Orkney College to review the implications of a change from weighted sums to a credits based funding model, however, this group had not met to date. It was noted that Colleges Scotland had advised that implementation of the new funding model would be delayed until academic year 2015/16. A number of complex issues needed to be addressed to ensure that appropriate funding was provided to remote and dispersed rural colleges and further information about the new credits model was needed. It was noted that the Associate Principal FE would prepare a paper for consideration at a later meeting.

APFE

3.3 ONS Reclassification of Colleges

The Chair advised that following the transfer of reserves from AP colleges to independent trusts as result of the ONS decision to reclassify Incorporated Colleges as Public Bodies there was now a need to clarify insurance arrangements for APs to ensure that colleges were able to respond appropriately to a major event. It was noted that Colleges Scotland were considering self-insurance options and a collective corporate insurance policy may be required. An alternative may be to request a guarantee from government. FERB requested clarification of available options and implications.

APFE

3.4 Arrangements for Appointment of Regional Chair

The COOS advised Dr Foxley would be appointed as the Regional Chair with effect from 1st July 2014. It was noted that Dr Foxley would need to resign as Chair of West Highland College before this date.

3.5 Assignment of Colleges

FERB noted that The Assigned Colleges (University of the Highlands and Islands) Order 2014 had been laid before the Scottish parliament on 30th May 2014. The Order would come into force on 1st August 2014.

3.6 Student Support Funding 2014/15

FERB noted that the level of student funding available for FE colleges when aggregated across the region highlighted a shortfall in the region of £1M. It was noted that in previous years the SFC had provided an in year re-distribution to individual colleges to address shortfalls, however, FERB agreed to request the SFC to revisit the allocation methodology now and to provide a more informed distribution.

In addition FERB noted that AP Principals had agreed to distribute the allocation for the 2014/15 session in accordance with the methodology used for 2013/14.

APFE

3.7 European Funding

FERB received a presentation from and noted the accompanying paper FERB14-017 prepared by the UHI Director of European and International Funding in connection with progress towards developing University strategy and policy in order to take best advantage of new EU strategy and funding programmes for 2014-20. FERB was pleased to note that an arrangement had been made to increase funding for Perth College UHI activity as well as their inclusion in the strategy.

Exit L
Stewart at
15:03

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chair provided FERB with a verbal report in connection with his recent activities. The following points were noted:

The Chair had attended a meeting of Colleges Scotland on 4th June and had made a case for a reduced subscription and for Colleges Scotland to make a case to government for enhanced funding for the entire FE sector.

FERB was currently represented on the National Pay Bargaining group by a staff member of Perth College UHI. It was noted that if APs were to pay staff the national average that this would have a significant negative impact on some budgets. It was important that the complexities of the region were understood and that FERB was given appropriate opportunity to contribute to discussions.

5 IMPLEMENTING FERB TERMS OF REFERENCE

FERB noted paper FERB 14-018 containing minutes of the SLWG held on 16 April 2014.

FERB agreed a three stage mechanism for agreeing the overheads associated with progressing FERB responsibilities. This would include presenting a budget, agreeing the budget through FE Executive Board and endorsement by FERB.

6 TEACHING AND FEE WAIVER FUNDING 2014-15

FERB considered paper FERB14-019 setting out options for allocating the 2014/15 Teaching and Fee Waiver funding. Following due consideration FERB agreed to third option presented this was to distribute on the basis of the WSUMS allocation.

7 Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan (SIP)

FERB noted the draft SIP paper FERB14-020. The SDS representative advised that the final SIP had not been agreed to date. It was currently being updated to strengthen elements relating to social care, digital health, ITC, forestry and agriculture.

FERB noted that some of the data contained within the draft SIP was out of date and noted the risk of the document becoming out of date particularly if funding agencies were going to rely upon it to inform grant allocations. It was noted that the Director of Marketing Communications and Planning would provide more accurate and up to date data and it was also agreed that a caveat should be added to the document to make it clear that situations were fluid and that up to date information would be available from particular sources. It was also noted that SDS intended to refresh data within the plan annually.

DMCP
& SDS

FERB requested that SDS provide disaggregated information in connection with the data included within the SIP for the Highland region.

8 DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

FERB considered paper FERB14-021 prepared by the AP FE concerning recent progress to develop a more consistent and cohesive approach to working effectively with the region's 72 secondary schools.

Exit P
Cambell,
B Ross,
G
McGuiness
at 15:58

It was noted that the UHI marketing and Communication's team would produce some information for schools to highlight the services that APs could provide including examples of best practice already provided within the partnership.

DMCP

In view of the impact of the Wood Commission FERB agreed that the Principal of Argyll College UHI should through the Regional Schools Group develop an action plan for good practice and quantify activity to support the marketing strategy.

FD

9 Bridge 2 Business

FERB was pleased to note paper FERB14-022 providing confirmation that the Highlands Islands new hub for the Young Enterprise Scotland initiative "Bridge 2 Business" would be located at Create on the Inverness college campus.

Exit D
Macbeath
B Ritchie
at 16:15

10 Estates and Other Capital Needs

FERB noted paper FERB14-023 collated by the APFE providing an early note of AP aspirations for future capital projects and investments in estates around the partnership. FERB noted that the paper provided a useful starting point for developing a coordinated capital project strategy that would assist with identifying priorities and development of the university in a coordinated manner. It was noted that development of the capital plan would require fuller information, in particular with regard to how proposed projects link to curriculum development as well as improvements to the student experience and partnership working.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- It was noted that Peter Campbell had replaced Drew Ratter as Chair of Shetland College. In accordance with the Articles of Association Peter would become a member of Court representing the FE APs.
- The Chair requested that members provide examples of rural deprivation.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next meeting – 18th September 2014