

University of the Highlands and Islands

Draft Minute

Committee Further Education Regional Board (FERB)
Date & Time Thursday 18th September 2014 at 2.00pm
Location EO1 Ness Walk, Inverness
Purpose Scheduled meeting
Quorum Half plus one.

Present

Michael Foxley (Chair)	
Janice Annal	Chair of Orkney College UHI VC
Peter Campbell	Chair of Shetland College UHI
Niall Smith	Chair of North Highland College UHI
Garry Sutherland	Chair of Inverness College UHI
Andrew Campbell	Chair of Argyll College UHI
Gordon Bushnell	Vice Chair of West Highland College UHI
Ian Mathers	Acting Chair of Perth College UHI
Gordon McGuinness	Independent member – Skills Development Scotland
Calum Macpherson	Independent Member
Mike Devenney	Associate Principal FE

In attendance

Lydia Rohmer Principal of West Highland College UHI
 Bill Ross Principal of Orkney College UHI VC
 Irene Peterson Acting Principal of Shetland College UHI VC
 Donald MacBeath Principal of North Highland College UHI
 Dianne Rawlinson Principal of Inverness College UHI
 Fraser Durie Principal of Argyll College UHI
 Willie Shannon Principal of NAFC Marine Centre UHI
 Ian MacMillan Principal of Lews Castle College UHI
 Margaret Munckton Principal of Perth College UHI
 Frank Hughes Principal of Moray College UHI VC
 Archie Maclean Deputy Principal Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI
 Clive Mulholland UHI Principal and Vice Chancellor
 Crichton Lang UHI Deputy Principal
 Sharon Drysdale SFC
 Linda Stewart in part
 Jason Thurlbeck in part
 Roger Sendall (*minutes*)

Apologies

Carole Buxton HIE, Hugh Fraser Director of Education, Rachel Parker, Lisa Massie, Jana Hutt, Brian Chaplin, Bruce Ritchie, David Sandison, Patrick O'Donnell, Boyd Robertson, Michael Gibson, Fiona Larg

Agenda Item

Action

1 WELCOME

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

Declarations of interest: None

AOCB: Appointment of Chairs and Board Members of Incorporated Colleges.

2 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2014 (FERB14-026) were reviewed and approved.

It was noted that Dr Foxley's formal appointment as Regional Chair took place on 11th August 2014 not 1st July 2014 as originally anticipated (item 3.4).

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Induction of new members and ongoing training and development

The Corporate Governance Manager reported that a number of training and development sessions were being organised for members of Court and that opportunity would be provided for members of FERB to attend or view a recording of these sessions. Further information would be provided in due course.

3.2 Shared Services

The UHI Principal reported that a number of issues had arisen with the original proposals for transferring staff into a Cost Sharing Group (CSG). An alternative proposal was currently being developed and further details would be provided for comment within the next few weeks.

3.3 ONS Reclassification of Colleges

The Chair advised that work was continuing through the FE Regional Chairs group and Colleges Scotland to try to overturn a requirement for the Incorporated Colleges to self-insure. An update on progress would be provided in due course.

3.4 Student Support Funding 2014/15

The APFE reported that the SFC had been requested to distribute student support payments early and also to reconsider the allocation methodology as the partnership had historically been underfunded to an aggregate of £1M per annum. It was noted that the SFC recognised the pressures being experienced by some colleges and that they had established a review group that would meet in October to consider the issues and possible solutions.

3.5 Colleges Scotland Subscription

The Chair reported that Colleges Scotland had committed to reducing the annual subscription fee for UHI partners to better reflect the level of activity/service provided to the region.

3.6 National Pay Bargaining

The Chair advised that the FE Regional Lead for the Edinburgh region was heading up a working group to consider the implications and issues associated with a national pay bargain. The University was currently represented on this group by a staff member of Perth College UHI, however, opportunity existed for the partnership to appoint an additional member and the Chair encouraged members to nominate an appropriate individual to strengthen representation from the region.

3.7 Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan (SIP)

FERB noted that the final draft of the SIP would be presented to a meeting of the Convention of the Highlands and Islands (COHI) on 25th September 2014 for final comments. The plan would then go to a joint meeting of SFC, HIE and SDS planned for 27th October for formal approval prior to publication. Copies would be provided to members for comment in due course. It was noted that the document would be a living document and that data sets would be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. FERB was pleased to note that SDS, HIE and SFC had committed to fund a Programme Manager position to help implement actions within the plan and that opportunity may exist for this to be a University position. FERB was also pleased to note that some good progress had been made with regard to developing a complimentary plan for Perth College.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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

The Scottish Government wanted to improve corporate governance arrangements and controls across the FE sector. Proposals would include implementation of a new FE code of good governance and institutions would also be encouraged to enhance engagement with students and to involve students in all levels of decision making.

Further information was expected to be released by SFC over the next few weeks to clarify the implications of a change from Weighted Sums to a credit based funding allocation system.

5 Student Representation

FERB noted paper FERB 14-028 providing an update on progress made with the Student Representation Project in formulating proposals to bring about new student representation arrangements in 2015/16.

In addition it was noted that the previous FE student representative had completed her studies and was no longer eligible to be a member of the Board. FERB agreed to appoint a replacement student representative for the 2014/15 session in accordance with the proposal contained within the paper.

6 Strategic Vision and Plan 2015-2020

FERB noted paper FERB 14-029 providing an update on progress with regard to refreshing the University's strategic vision and plan for the period 2015-2020.

7 Priorities/Key Issues for session 2014/15 and beyond

FERB considered paper FERB14-030 prepared by the Associate Principal Further Education providing a summary of key issues and points arising from SFC and Scottish Government guidance and funding arrangements for 2015/16 and commitments made by the University within the agreed Outcome Agreement.

The Associate Principal Further Education requested that AP Chairs instruct their Principals to liaise directly with him and to highlight progress on required actions to enable him to develop an updated performance report in time for the next meeting of FERB in December.

8 Responding to the Wood Commission

FERB noted paper FERB 14-031 prepared by the Associate Principal Further Education providing a report on the specific steps that were being taken in relation to delivering Wood Commission objectives including new products such as Foundation and Advanced apprenticeships.

9 European Funding

FERB noted paper FERB14-032 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.

L Stewart
attending.

10 Short Life Working Group (SLWG) – FERB Terms of Reference

FERB noted paper FERB14-033 providing a minute of the SLWG meeting held on 20th June 2014 and an updated draft schedule providing a summary note on the ways that FERB would work to deliver its responsibilities. I

Comments on the draft TOR were invited and these should be forwarded to the Associate Principal Further Education as early as possible.

11 Development of FE Risk Register

The Associate Principal Further Education advised members that he would be working with the Corporate Governance Manager in an effort to populate a new FE risk register in the agreed partnership format. A copy of the new register would be presented to the next meeting of FERB in December and members were encouraged to email the APFE in advance of this meeting if there were any issues that they wanted to highlight.

J
Thurlbeck
attending

12 Partnership Assurance Mechanisms

FERB considered paper FERB14-034 provided by the UHI Head of Internal Audit setting out a proposed method for optimising audit time and partnership assurance mechanisms to support the needs of Court, Audit, FGPC and FERB.

It was noted that FERB was supportive of the pragmatic approach suggested within the paper. In addition, it was noted that FEB felt that there would be a benefit in convening a meeting of AP Audit Chairs to consider internal audit partnership planning and requirements.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next meeting – 4th December 2014