

University of the Highlands and Islands

Committee Further Education Regional Board (FERB)
Date & Time Friday 15th May 2015 at 09.30pm
Location EO1 Ness Walk, Inverness
Purpose Scheduled meeting
Quorum Half plus one.

Present

Michael Foxley (Chair)	
Peter Campbell	Chair of Inverness College UHI
Garry Sutherland	Chair of Shetland College UHI
Jana Hutt	Chair of Moray College UHI
Andrew Campbell	Chair of Argyll College UHI -VC
Karen McGregor	Vice Chair of West Highland College UHI - VC
Grant Myles	Chair of Perth College UHI - VC
David Sandison	Vice Chair North Atlantic Fisheries College
Carroll Buxton	Independent member – HIE
Gordon McGuinness	Independent member – Skills Development Scotland
Wilf Weir	Independent Member – Director of Education VC
Calum MacPherson	Independent Member
Lisa Massie	Independent Member - VC
Patrick O'Donnell	Staff Member
Matthew Cameron	FE Student Member (in part)
Mike Devenney	Associate Principal FE

In attendance

Lydia Rohmer Principal of West Highland College UHI VC
 Bill Ross Principal of Orkney College UHI VC – in part VC
 Bryan Dodds Member North Highland College Board of Management - VC
 Donald MacBeath Principal of North Highland College UHI - VC
 Iain MacMillan Principal of Lews Castle College – in part VC
 Fiona Larg UHI Chief Operating Officer and Secretary
 Roger Sendall (*minutes*)

Apologies Brian Chaplin Chair of Lews Castle College UHI, Janice Annal Chair of Orkney College UHI VC

Agenda Item

1 WELCOME

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

Declarations of interest: Mr MacPherson advised that he was employed by the Robertson Group who had been involved in discussions with the University in relation to the provision of student residences. Agenda item 10 refers.

AOCB: None.

2 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2015 (FERB15-013) were reviewed and approved.

2.2 The draft minutes of the FE Executive Board meeting held on 6th May 2015 (FERB15-014) were noted.

Action

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan (SIP)

FERB considered a paper dated 14th May prepared by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) providing a draft summary of progress with the key themes of the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan (SIP) and additional activities that had emerged since publication of the SIP. It was noted that submissions were required from the three Islands' Authorities to complete the update paper. Given this delay, members were invited to make any further contributions via the Associate Principal FE and the SDS Representative with a view to further updating the paper prior to recirculation.

SDS/
APFE

FERB noted that Councillor Drew Hendry had been elected as a member of the UK Parliament. FERB noted that as a consequence, a new chair would be needed to lead the SIP Programme Board of stakeholders tasked with implementing the SIP's actions.

3.2 Shared Services

The Chief Operating Officer and Secretary reported that consultation with staff in relation to plans to implement a shared service for delivering LIS activity across the partnership would begin on 18th May. FERB noted that an issue in relation to the LGPS pension position for staff transferring into the new service had arisen in recent discussions with Highland Council. This potentially significant matter was currently being considered, however, in all other respects the project was progressing in accordance with an agreed target start date of 1st August 2015.

3.3 Wood Commission Pathfinders

The Associate Principal FE reported good progress across the region with respect to the development of plans to introduce Foundation Apprenticeships for session 2015/16 and/or session 2016/17. The progress made in the Highlands and Islands had been commended by Skills Development Scotland. An updated "Activity Tracker" had only recently been received and would be provided to members after the meeting. Proposals for providing leadership for the new regional hub that was to be set up to steer these developments were being developed.

APFE

3.4 Student Representation Project

The Associate Principal FE explained that elections for a new integrated tertiary students' association that would replace UHISA had been completed. Luke Humberstone (Inverness College UHI) and Lorna Stanger (North Highland College UHI) had been elected as the President and Vice President (Further Education) respectively and they would take up office on 1st June 2015. Work was progressing to formally establish the new association and its governance and funding arrangements. A paper on this would be presented to the Higher Education Partnership Policy and Resources Committee at the end of May.

It was noted that this would be Matt Cameron's final meeting as the FE Student Member and FERB recorded its appreciation for his contributions to date.

3.5 Attendance of Principals at FERB meetings.

The Chief Operating Officer and Secretary reported that the University Court had considered the request from FERB Chairs to allow all AP Principals to attend FERB meetings as a matter of routine. It was noted that Court had rejected the request on the grounds that routine attendance may lead to confusion between governance and management arrangements. It was noted that AP Principals would continue to be permitted to attend for individual items with the FERB Chair's consent and it was also noted that efforts had been made to provide greater assurance and better quality information to AP Chairs in advance of meetings. It was noted that AP Chairs were pleased

with the direction of travel and the improved quality of information that had presented to this meeting. The Chair encouraged members to submit comments on any issues or ideas that would lead to better working and committee effectiveness.

3.6 Financial Memorandum (FM)

The Chief Operating Officer and Secretary reported that the Principal, AP (FE) and she had met with AP Principals on 7th May to review the draft FM. Good progress had been achieved and it was noted that an amended draft would be circulated to APs together with a draft Partnership Agreement shortly. It was noted that the SFC were keen for the FM to be progressed quickly particularly because FE funds were being routed through the University with effect from 1st April 2015.

COOS
10:15
Enter –
M Cam.
I Mac.

4 CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

FERB noted the Chair’s written report FERB15-015. It was noted that members would welcome a briefing paper setting out the “party line” in relation to dealings with government and SFC on issues such as rurality, national pay bargaining and practical issues with ONS compliance.

APFE

5 OUTCOME AGREEMENT

FERB noted the final version of the revised Outcome Agreement 2014/15-2016/17 FERB15-016.

6 DISTRIBUTION OF SFC FUNDING 2015/16

FERB approved paper FERB15-017 setting out the allocation of FE funding for teaching, capital and maintenance and student support to academic partners as recommended by FEEB.

Enter
B Ross
10:35

In presenting the paper, the Principal of LCC highlighted that the paper presented did not include an additional grant promised by SFC to facilitate additional growth at West Highland College. It was noted that discussions were continuing with SFC on this issue and FERB agreed that such funds when released by SFC should flow directly to WHC.

Members noted that a new credit based funding formula with identified funding groups would be progressed by SFC from 1st August 2015 but that this would be phased in over several sessions. The new methodology would be likely to cause a number of challenges for the region and the principals were currently working through FEEB in an effort to ensure that the region received a fair and appropriate allocation.

Exit
C Buxton
I Mac
10:50

7 FE REGIONAL CURRICULUM PLAN 2015/16

FERB considered paper FERB15-018 providing an update on progress with plans for implementing new curriculum across the region from 2015/16, much of which would be conditional upon receipt of European funding.

8 STUDENT ACTIVITY LEVELS SESSION 2014/15

FERB noted paper FERB15-019 setting out the regional and individual college performances against student activity targets for the current session.

Exit B
Ross

FERB noted that whilst some colleges were predicted to fail to meet their targets this session that the region as a whole was expected to exceed its target by approximately 1-2%, thereby avoiding risk of claw back.

FERB requested a paper setting out individual college performance against agreed student activity targets looking back over a longer time period and that this be circulated to members in advance of the next meeting.

APFE

9 RURAL DEPRIVATION REPORT

FERB considered paper FERB15-020 comprising a draft report into rural deprivation in the Highlands and Islands region commissioned by the FERB.

10 ESTATES PLANNING & FUNDING

FERB noted paper FERB15-021 setting out a revised list of estates needs as notified by the University's academic partners reflecting aspirations to improve the learning and teaching environment across the University partnership.

Exit J Hutt
11:30

11 SFC REVIEW OF UHI GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AS AN RSB

FERB noted paper FERB15-022 providing confirmation of SFC's satisfaction with the University's arrangements for operating as a Regional Strategic Body for Further Education.

12 COLLEGE FINANCIAL INFORMATION

FERB noted paper FERB15-023 providing a summary of individual college projected financial outruns for 2014/15 and risk status. FERB noted that only one college had updated its projection from the previous quarter.

13 RISK MANAGEMENT

FERB noted paper FERB15-024 comprising the current FE Risk register and Corporate High Level Risk Reports.

14 ITEMS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

14.1 Colleges Scotland Liaison – Noted that the Chair would contact the Vice Chair of WEST Highland College to discuss coordinating liaison and participation in Colleges Scotland activities.

14.2 Academic Partnership Agreement – It was noted that the University's lawyers were working on a draft new partnership agreement and that a draft agreement would be circulated for comments in due course.

14.3 Development of Operational Plan – The Chief Operating Officer & Secretary was currently working with a number of AP Principals to finalise the Operating Plan.

Exit
G
Sutherland
d 11:37

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Incorporated College Board Member Appointments Process (item 4 refers)

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next meeting – 3rd September 2015