

## University of the Highlands and Islands

### Committee Further Education Regional Board (FERB)

**Date & Time** 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016  
**Location** EO1 Ness Walk, Inverness  
**Purpose** Scheduled meeting  
**Quorum** Half plus one.

**Present** Michael Foxley (Chair)

Andrew Campbell	Chair of Argyll College UHI (Telephone)
Grant Myles	Chair of Perth College UHI
John Hutcheson	Chair of West Highland College (VC)
Blair Sandison	Chair of North Highland College
Peter Campbell	Chair of Shetland College UHI (VC)
David Sandison	Chair of NAFC (VC)
Clive Rowlands	Chair of LCC
Sam Russel	Vice Chair Moray College UHI
Carroll Buxton	Independent Member HIE
Calum MacPherson	Independent Member
Lisa Massie	Independent Member (VC)
Patrick O'Donnell	Staff Member
Luke Humberstone	HISA President
Max Haddow Mendes	HISA Depute President FE
Aideen O'Malley	Chair SMO Board of Management (VC)
Irene Peterson	Associate Principal FE

### In attendance

Seonag Campbell – Representing SDS  
 Sharon Drysdale – Representing SFC  
 Lydia Rohmer Principal of West Highland College UHI  
 David Patterson – Principal of Moray College UHI  
 Donald MacBeath – Principal of NHC  
 Roddy Henry Depute Principal of Inverness College UHI  
 David Patterson Principal of Moray College UHI  
 Fiona Larg UHI Chief Operating Officer and Secretary  
 Clive Mulholland Principal and Vice Chancellor  
 Niall McArthur Director of Corporate Services  
 Michael Rayner Dean of Research – in part  
 Roger Sendall (*minutes*)

**Apologies** Neil Stewart, Euan Smith, Wilf Weir, Crichton Lang

### Agenda Item

1

### WELCOME

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed new members. It was noted that a quorum was present.

**Declarations of interest:** None

**AOCB:** None.

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### MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016 (FERB16-046) were reviewed and

### Action

approved

2.2 **Matters Arising:** The following points were noted:

FERB noted the matters arising paper FERB16-047.

Item 2 – It was noted that the Chair would circulate a copy of a response received from the SFC in relation to concerns raised by FERB about the 2016/17 funding announcement.

Chair

2.3 **Review of Delegated Decisions:** None.

2.4 **Minutes of FEED**

The minutes of the FE Executive Board meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (FERB16-048) were noted.

It was noted that the Chair of FERB intended to convene a special meeting of FERB early in 2017 to consider a number of financial issues referred to within the FEED minutes.

3 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chair provided a brief verbal report in relation to his recent activities. It was noted that the majority of his time had involved engagement with the SWG process, governance and funding discussions

4 **GOVERNANCE PLANNING & FUNDING ISSUES**

4.1 **SDS Skills Investment Plan (SIP)**

FERB noted paper FERB16-049.

It was noted that SDS had also provided some members with a presentation on progress with the SIP at the mornings workshop.

4.2 **Student Activity Levels 2015-16**

FERB noted paper FERB16-050 providing a report of confirmed student activity levels for the academic year 2015/16 and comparison data with the preceding five academic years. FERB was pleased to note that the partnership had collectively exceeded its credit target by 1.64%.

It was noted that headline figure included ESIF credits and it was important to note that the partners had collectively exceeded the SFC core funded credit target by over 5% and this constituted good evidence support a request to SFC for an increase in core credit numbers. The SFC representative confirmed that the regions performance was better than other regions and that opportunity may exist for the region to receive additional credits in the future.

FERB noted that the Principal & Vice Chancellor was meeting with the Scottish Minister for Brexit early in 2017 and that this would provide an opportunity to lobby for additional core funding to deliver further FE growth once EU funding was no longer available.

4.3 **Student Activity Levels 2016-17**

FERB considered paper FERB16-051 providing an overview of core credits achieved against agreed targets by individual academic partner as at 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

4.4 **Development of Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) 2017-18 to 2019-20**

FERB considered paper FERB16-052 relating to development of a new three-year tertiary outcome agreement with the SFC for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20. It was noted that the ROA would need to be provided to SFC in draft form by 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and that a final agreement was required by March 2017.

It was noted that FERB would have an opportunity to review a later draft of the ROA at its next meeting in February 2017.

#### 4.5 **Monitoring of Quality Arrangements**

FERB discussed paper FERB16-053 providing a summary overview of planned changes to the Education Scotland quality monitoring and assessment regime for further education colleges. FERB noted that the new approach would involve annual self-assessments instead of four yearly inspections by an HMI. FERB highlighted that there would be a benefit in colleges working together to produce a consistent framework for the self-assessments built on current internal monitoring processes as opposed to creating new onerous procedures.

It was noted that 2016/17 would be a transition year for the new process.

#### 4.6 **Highlands and Islands Work Based Learning Hub**

FERB noted an update report from the VP Work Based Learning including a status report on recruitment to Foundation Apprenticeships. FERB noted that whilst the numbers achieved were below the targets set that the programmes were progressing well and that uptake within the region was in excess of other areas. It was noted that FERB wanted to receive further information on the reasons behind withdrawals and the rationale underpinning target setting.

VPFE

#### 4.7 **Highlands and Islands Regional Schools Group**

FERB noted paper FERB16-055.

#### 4.8 **Moray College UHI – Financial Challenges**

FERB considered paper FERB16-056 provided by the Principal of Moray College UHI providing an update on the financial position currently being experienced by the college and continuing efforts to resolve them. The principal of Moray College explained that work was continuing to identify savings and opportunities for income growth, however, the Board of the College was also considering progressing a voluntary severance scheme, however, additional funding would be needed to progress such a scheme.

It was noted that the University's FGPC had requested urgent sight of a full recovery plan, however, this had not been provided to date.

#### 4.9 **SFC & Education Scotland Quality Arrangements**

FERB noted paper FERB16-057. It was noted that HISA were keen to be involved in the quality process.

Exit S  
Drysdale

#### 4.10 **Increase in AP Chair Representation on Court & Circulation of Papers**

The Chair of Shetland College UHI reported that AP Chairs had expressed a desire for increased representation on the University Court if an opportunity were to arise in future to amend governance structures. In addition, he requested that all Chairs and Principals should receive Court papers as a matter of routine.

P&amp;VC

The principal undertook to discuss both requests with the Chair and Chair of Court.

#### 4.11 **Research Teaching Linkage Project**

The Dean of Research presented a verbal report in connection with paper FERB16-058.

#### 4.12 **AP Financial Monitoring**

FERB noted paper FERB16-059 prepared by the Director of Corporate Resources. It was noted that FERB was keen to receive further narrative in future reports in relation to current circumstances.

FERB noted there was a significant financial risk to future income if the five incorporated colleges failed to collectively achieve a breakeven position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. It was noted that efforts were progressing with Principals and Finance Directors of the five colleges to mitigate this risk.

#### 4.12b **SFC Funding Allocation for Additional Operational Cost Pressures**

FERB approved paper FERB16-059b concerning the distribution of additional funding as recommended by FEEB

#### 4.13 **Capital Projects/Estates**

FERB noted paper FERB16-060.

COOS to liaise with SFC in an effort to identify when money will be released.

The Chair of NAFC requested clarification in relation to how the top three capital priorities had been identified. COOS to liaise with Chair of NAFC.

FERB noted that the plan should remain flexible so that a pragmatic approach could be taken to opportunities that might arise such as private investment for specific projects.

#### 4.14 **SFC One Plus Activity**

FERB noted paper FERB16-061.

FERB noted that there were circumstances where it was wholly appropriate to progress courses with more than 18 credits, however that a clear rationale was needed in each case.

#### 4.15 **Scottish Government Enterprise & Skills Review**

FERB discussed paper FERB16-062

#### 4.16 **Review of Innovation Centres**

It was noted that discussion on this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

#### 4.17 **SFC Strategic Dialogue Meetings**

FERB noted paper FERB16-043

COOS

4.18 **SWG Outcome and DFM Response**

FERB noted paper FERB16-064.

**5 RISK MANAGEMENT & INTERNAL AUDIT**

**5.1 Risk Register**

FERB noted paper FERB16-064 comprising the current FE Risk Register and UHI Corporate Risk Register and current issues log. It was noted that the position of the risk register should be moved up the agenda for the next meeting.

**5.2 AUDIT**

FERB noted paper FERB16-066 in relation to 2015/16 Audit Certificates for FE credits.

**6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting is 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017.