

REVIEW OF SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES

WORKING GROUP: STAFFING, LEARNERS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Minutes of Meeting held at 1pm on 11 May 2006 in the Scottish Funding Council Headquarters

Attendees:

Marian Healy, EIS (Joint Chair)

James Alexander, NUS Scotland (substituting for Melanie Ward: Joint Chair)

Victoria Beattie, ETLLD-FAED (Review of Scotland's Colleges Team)

Peter Beaumont, ETLLD-FAED (Skills and Staffing Team)

Claire Bell, Scottish Funding Council

Susan Bird, Stevenson College Edinburgh

John Bowditch, HMIE

Tom Craig, ETLLD-FAED (Skills and Staffing Team) (w/g Secretariat)

Heather Dunk, West Lothian College (substituting for Stewart McKillop)

Gail Edwards, NUS Scotland

Bill Harvey, Scottish Funding Council

John McCann, SFEU

Sheila Meikle, UNISON (substituting for Maureen Anderson)

Penny Neish, ASC

Apologies:

Maureen Anderson, UNISON

Col Baird, ETLLD-FAED (Review of Scotland's Colleges Team)

Gordon Casey, AMICUS

John Ireson, Skill Scotland

Iain McCaskey, SSAScot

Stewart McKillop, South Lanarkshire College

Melanie Ward, NUS Scotland (Joint Chair)

1. Chair's Introduction, Apologies etc.

- Apologies were recorded as noted above.

2. Presentation on Funding Requirements for Estates

- Claire Bell delivered a presentation to accompany her discussion paper circulated in advance. She said that while recent extra monies for estates had been very welcome, there was a need to sustain current funding levels in order to put the sector on a sound footing. She referred to projects and studies which the Council

was engaged in, as well as to recent publications including the 'Spaces for Learning' report and guidance on sustainable development and PFI/PPP. She also said there was an issue regarding a central energy efficiency fund, which the Council was unable to access as – according to the definitions used – it was not a public sector institution. Any help that the group could offer in this respect would be appreciated.

- Some members expressed interest in the link which the presentation suggested between estates improvement and levels of retention. As retention was a key issue for colleges, it was agreed that it would be useful to elaborate on the evidence for this link with a view to informing the group's recommendations.
- It was queried why estates programmes excluded the likes of sports facilities at the moment. Such facilities, it was noted, could help to support other Executive priorities. Claire Bell replied that this kind of thing was not strictly excluded but would usually be taken forward within the context of collaborative community-based projects.
- It was wondered why the discussion paper did not explicitly mention the costs associated with estates modernisation. Claire Bell said the reason was that this, being a more subjective area, was covered under other headings.
- There was a question as to how the Council evaluated staff satisfaction with regards to estates improvements. Claire Bell said that this was something the Council was working to improve and that they were looking at university models for ideas.
- It was wondered whether the Council was still taking forward smaller scale projects in respect of DDA compliance. Claire Bell said that a funding stream had been available for this for some years. However, the Council increasingly expected colleges to build this kind of work into its regular bids for estates funding.
- Peter Beaumont undertook to investigate whether guidance on the format of Spending Review bids was yet available, for the group's information.
- Claire Bell advised that the Council was keen to set up some kind of sustainability forum. John McCann said that the SFEU would be happy to collaborate with the Council in support of the sustainability agenda.
- Susan Bird suggested an amendment to the third bullet point of the Conclusion section of Claire's paper. She suggested something be inserted along the lines of 'meeting curriculum needs'.

ACTION

- **Funding Council to provide further evidence of the link between estates improvement and retention rates with a view to informing the group's recommendations**
- **FAED to source central guidance, if available, on the format of Spending Review bids**
- **SFC and SFEU to discuss ways of collaborating in support of the sustainability agenda**
- **Amendment to be made to SFC discussion paper as suggested by Susan Bird**

3. Note of Meeting of 23 March 2006, incl. update on Action Points

- The minutes were agreed to be a fair and accurate record.
- An update on outstanding action points was provided as shown below:

Description of Action	Person(s) to provide update
The Executive to report back to a future meeting on whether its responsibilities under the 1993 regulations can be delegated to another body.	Peter said that he would aim to give a report at the next meeting.
The Funding Council to provide FAED with as much information as possible re funding requirements for estates by end February 2006	Done. Item 2 on the agenda.
NUS and ASC to report back to the group on whether they think the joint audit idea would be worthwhile	NUS still to meet with ASC.
In due course, Scottish Equalities Unit to be invited to make a presentation to the group	Will be invited to a meeting after June.
Holistic discussion of student representation issues to take place at a later meeting of the group	Will be held at June meeting.
John McCann to feedback to relevant colleagues the views and suggestions of members with regards to the Profiling of Staff project.	Done.
John McCann to provide group with final Profiling of Staff report as soon as it becomes available.	John McCann suggested that the Interim Report could be available for the June meeting.
As noted in minutes of research sub-group, FAED to prepare a list of common concerns/themes for discussion by the group at a future meeting.	Will be ready for June meeting.
In due course, FAED to inform Scottish Equalities Unit about the work undertaken by ASD and the SLALE group in relation to the student experience.	Will be done shortly.
NUS to send suggestions to FAED for a presentation and an alternative venue for the meeting to be held in June.	Done. The meeting will be held at Reid Kerr College with a joint presentation by the Principal and the President of the Students Association.

4. Update on Professional Development Sub-group

- Peter Beaumont gave a verbal update on the progress of the Professional Development Sub-group. He said that at the last meeting on 23 March there had two main items of business. The first had been the presentations delivered by the associate members of the Sub-group, viz. the PDF (represented by Evelyn Adams), LLUK (represented by Christine Fitton), the Teacher Education Institutions (represented by Grace Sheed), and the SFEU (represented by John McCann). These had all been very useful and informative.

- The second main item had been a discussion around the TQ(FE) statistics exercise. Peter advised that the deadline for this had been extended and that about 25 responses had now been received. So far, the comments had mainly centred around the potential costs of implementation along with issues regarding data collection and, for example, staff being employed by more than one college.
- Bill Harvey had also given a quick update on the Funding Council's CPD pilot.
- As usual, papers from the Sub-group would be circulated to members of the full working group once they had been cleared.
- One member expressed a concern regarding the way that the Sector Skills Councils were developing and the potential cost implications this could have for providers. Peter Beaumont undertook to investigate this matter and report back to the group.

ACTION

- **FAED to investigate issue regarding developing role of SSCs and report back to the group on this**

5. Any Other Business

- No matters were raised under this heading.

List of Action Points

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- **SFC and SFEU to discuss ways of collaborating in support of the sustainability agenda**
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**Tom Craig
ETLLD-FAED
18 May 2006**