

REVIEW OF SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES

WORKING GROUP: STAFFING, LEARNERS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Minutes of Meeting held at 1pm on 16 February 2006 in South Lanarkshire College (Cambuslang campus)

Attendees:

Marian Healy, EIS (Joint Chair)

James Alexander, NUS Scotland (substituting for Melanie Ward)
Victoria Beattie, ETLLD-FAED (Review of Scotland's Colleges Team)
Peter Beaumont, ETLLD-FAED (Skills and Staffing Team)
Susan Bird, Stevenson College Edinburgh
John Bowditch, HMIE
Gordon Casey, AMICUS
Tom Craig, ETLLD-FAED (Skills and Staffing Team) (w/g Secretariat)
Heather Dunk, West Lothian College (substituting for Penny Neish, ASC)
Gail Edwards, NUS Scotland
Bill Harvey, Scottish Funding Council
John McCann, SFEU
Iain McCaskey, SSAScot
Stewart McKillop, South Lanarkshire College
Sheila Meikle, UNISON (substituting for Maureen Anderson)

Apologies:

Maureen Anderson, UNISON
Col Baird, ETLLD-FAED (Review of Scotland's Colleges Team)
Claire Bell, Scottish Funding Council
John Ireson, Skill Scotland
Penny Neish, ASC
Melanie Ward, NUS Scotland (Joint Chair)

1. Chair's Introduction, Apologies etc.

- Apologies were recorded as noted above.

2. Presentation on Estates Development

- Group member Stewart McKillop delivered a presentation on the estates development process that South Lanarkshire College was going through. Following this, he answered questions from members on related issues.

3. Note of Meeting of 12 January 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	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 Beaumont advised that he hoped to bring a paper to the next or subsequent meeting of the group.
The Funding Council to provide FAED with as much information as possible re funding requirements for estates by end February 2006	This action point to be carried forward to March meeting.
ASC to feedback to group regarding the views of the Principal's Forum in relation to the Charter of Minimum Rights	Stewart McKillop advised that while Principals were very supportive of ensuring the student voice was heard, the response to the Charter itself had been mixed.
FAED to obtain both SPARQs report and HMI aspect report on student participation and make these available to the group	Done. Aspect report circulated with papers. SPARQS report circulated by NUS.
NUS and ASC to report back to the group on whether they think the joint audit idea would be worthwhile	Gail Edwards advised that this would be discussed shortly, along with other issues, at a meeting with Tom Kelly, ASC.
NUS and Funding Council to discuss and report on the creation of shared student areas within the context of FE/HE co-location	Gail Edwards advised that NUS and SFC would discuss this as and when the situation arose.
NUS to consider developing a costed best practice model for student representation in colleges	Gail Edwards advised that the NUS did not think this would be appropriate at the present time.
NUS to arrange presentation from student association at meeting to be held in March	Done. Jenny Lee Students' Association will deliver.
FAED to revise the draft specification for the research project on the student experience and circulate it by e-mail to members for comments. (If no resolution, meeting of volunteers group to be arranged without delay).	Victoria Beattie advised that Analytical Services colleagues were almost finished a literature review to identify where the gaps in research lay. Following this, the small group could agree a revised specification.
FAED to advise group on costs and tender process once final scope of research project on student experience agreed	Final scope pending outcome of literature review. See above.
Interim Report for Profiling of Staff Project to go on agenda for next meeting	Done. See item 5.
In due course, Scottish Equalities Unit to be invited to make a presentation to the group	Unit not yet established.
NUS to check on availability of Adam Smith College as venue for meeting on 23 March	Done. The meeting will be held at the Stenton campus.

4. Student Representation in Scotland's Colleges

- John Bowditch HMI introduced the HMIE Aspect Report on 'Student Representation in Scottish Further Education Colleges'. This document had been circulated in advance.
- As is customary with aspect reports, 6 colleges had been visited. In addition, structured phone interviews had taken place with a further 4 colleges and use had been made of the 20 college reviews that had been undertaken during the previous two years. Both NUS and SPARQS had been involved in the exercise.
- The report highlighted a number of issues, including: the varying effectiveness of student representation on Boards of Management (and the need for training to address this); the lack of continuity of representation, due to the style of delivery in FE; and the under-representation of part-time, distance and flexible learners in particular. In the light of these and other issues, the report made a series of recommendations for both the Funding Council and colleges to address.
- Heather Dunk described the difficulties West Lothian College had experienced in getting students to join the Board, although she noted they had developed other mechanisms for ensuring that students were represented. These included the use of focus groups for part-time students.
- Following some discussion, it was agreed that the group should look at the report again alongside the SPARQS report, SG-P08 and the finalised research specification at a later meeting. It was noted that this discussion might take up the larger part of the agenda.
- It was suggested that a Board Member could be responsible for "buddying" a student.

ACTION

- **Holistic discussion of student representation issues to take place at a later meeting of the group**

5. Update on Profiling of Staff Project

- John McCann gave an update on this project, which had been discussed at earlier meetings. He explained that though the initial work had been done, it had been agreed to include further data – from the Funding Council – which had recently become available. He hoped that an interim report would be agreed before the end of February, which he would then be able to use as the basis for presentations to interested parties. The full report would be available shortly after Easter.

ACTION

- **John McCann to provide Profiling of Staff report to group in due course**

6. Update on Professional Development Sub-group

- Peter Beaumont advised that the first meeting of the Sub-group had been held prior to the previous main group meeting. With reference to discussion paper SG-P01, circulated in advance, he explained that while there had been general agreement to the approach proposed by the Reviews Team, some amendments

had subsequently been made to the discussion paper to reflect both the general discussion and some particular points made by members.

- Members endorsed the approach described in the revised discussion paper.
- There had also been a request at the meeting for a Conceptual Framework that would outline the rationale for the approach that was being proposed. A draft of this had now been created and would be discussed by the Sub-group at its meeting that afternoon.
- It was agreed that the first set of minutes and the Conceptual Framework for the Sub-group should be circulated to all members once they had been finalised.
- Members also agreed that the Professional Development Forum (PDF) should be invited to join the Sub-group as an Associate member and that their representative should be a practitioner.

ACTION

- **Minutes and Conceptual Framework for Sub-group to be circulated to all members once finalised**

7. Any Other Business

- Peter Beaumont advised that while the agenda for today's meeting had been fairly light, the expectation was that the next meeting would be more substantial. This was because various bits of work in progress would hopefully be completed by then.
- Gordon Casey gave his apologies for the next meeting of the group.

List of Action Points

- **Holistic discussion of student representation issues to take place at a later meeting of the group**
- **John McCann to provide Profiling of Staff report to group in due course**
- **Minutes and Conceptual Framework for Sub-group to be circulated to all members once finalised**

**Tom Craig
ETLLD-FAED
28 February 2006**