

REVIEW OF SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES

**WORKING GROUP: STAFFING, LEARNERS
AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

**Minutes of Meeting
held at 2pm on 20 November 2006
at St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh**

Attendees:

Marian Healy, EIS (Joint Chair)

James Alexander, NUS Scotland (Joint Chair)

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

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

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

Susan Bird, Stevenson College Edinburgh

Gordon Casey, AMICUS

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

Bill Harvey, Scottish Funding Council

John Ireson, Skill Scotland

Martin Kirkwood, Scottish Funding Council (substitute for Claire Bell)

Matthew Lancashire, NUS Scotland (substitute for Gail Edwards)

John McCann, SFEU

Stewart McKillop, South Lanarkshire College

Sheila Meikle, UNISON

Penny Neish, ASC

Apologies:

Maureen Anderson, UNISON

Claire Bell, Scottish Funding Council

John Bowditch, HMIE

Iain McCaskey, SSAScot

1. Chair's Introduction, Apologies etc.

- Apologies were recorded as noted above.

2. Note of Meeting of 12 October 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
Funding Council to provide further evidence of the link between estates improvement and retention rates with a view to informing the group's recommendations	Stewart McKillop would present on the qualitative benefits of estates improvement at item 4.
FAED to source central guidance, if available, on the format of Spending Review bids	Peter Beaumont advised that this was not yet available.
Peter Beaumont to present revised paper on estimated costs of teacher training at the October meeting	Peter Beaumont would give an update at item 7.
FAED to prepare a paper on staff governance standard for discussion at the November meeting.	Done. This would be discussed at item 6.
Funding Council to provide members with the outcomes of the Capital Investment Committee's discussion on estates for the December meeting so that the findings can be used by the working group in their draft final recommendations paper.	Pending December meeting.
Victoria Beattie to e-mail members seeking volunteers for the Sub-group which would pull together the final report.	Done. Membership of group finalised.
FAED to convene Report drafting Sub-group in due course.	Done. Victoria Beattie would provide an update at item 8.

3. Profiling the College Workforce presentation

- John McCann opted not to deliver a presentation and instead spoke to the report circulated in advance. He advised that the report was fairly dense in terms of facts and figures.
- The key messages from the report fell into the following categories:
 1. HR Management
 2. CPD
 3. Data Collection
 4. The benefits of repeating the exercise.
- HR Management – there was a strong committed workforce in FE which helped to facilitate a progressive agenda. Despite a good HR foundation, there were still some challenges facing the sector. These included: low staff turnover, an ageing workforce, and succession planning.
- CPD – this would be vital in helping staff to adapt to future challenges. However, there was a need for better recognition of training.
- Data Collection – the evidence indicated that data collection was not used for workforce planning. There therefore needed to be a debate about the purpose of data collection. Members acknowledged that the duty to promote equalities and other legislation would have an increasing impact. It was noted that the aging population issue was one area where the data from the exercise had not been especially helpful since the age range brackets had been too broad, particularly the 50 to 59 range. Col Baird noted that there was information available on the

projected student populations in both FE and HE and offered to make this available to the group.

- John Ireson noted that colleges and HEIs were often doing better by their disabled students than by their disabled staff. This resulted in some staff being afraid to disclose their disability. It was agreed that John would provide John McCann with some details of the experiences of disabled staff, including examples of good practice.
- John McCann agreed to provide members with a paper outlining the key messages from the report, excluding those related to CPD, in time for the meeting on 14 December.

ACTION

- **FAED to make available information on projected student populations in FE and HE.**
- **John Ireson to pass details of the experiences of disabled staff, including examples of good practice, to John McCann.**
- **John McCann to table a paper highlighting the key messages from the Profile Report in time for the meeting on 14 December.**

4. Qualitative Benefits of Estates Improvement presentation

- Stewart McKillop delivered a presentation on this topic. Afterwards, he answered questions from members on related issues.
- He tabled copies of the CAGE report for Higher Education and noted that the content of his presentation drew heavily on the statistics contained therein. His presentation also drew on HMIE reports and on replies received directly from six other colleges. He said that he intended to share all of this data with Martin Kirkwood.
- Susan Bird wondered if there was an issue about creating a demand, through improved estates, that colleges would have difficulty in meeting. Stewart said undoubtedly, but that improved estates also brought opportunities for an increased flow of income, e.g. through commercial renting. Martin Kirkwood added that a significant increase in student numbers did not happen across the board.
- John Ireson said there was a significant disability angle in respect of new builds. In particular, he noted that open plan designs could cause real problems for some disabled students. For example, there were recent cases where staff were told that they could no longer use “text to speech” software. Susan Bird further observed that certain students, particularly those with mental health issues, had need of private space within the college estate.
- Peter Beaumont wondered if the figures for retention of students were as impressive as those for enrolment. Stewart said that while the effect was likely to diminish over time, the CAGE report certainly argued that retention levels were significantly improved.
- It was wondered whether some testimonials could be obtained from a mixture of employers, staff and students. Stewart said he would try to obtain these and then send them to Martin.

- It was noted that the arguments in terms of longer-term maintenance funding for Scotland's Colleges would be covered in Martin's presentation at the meeting in December.

ACTION

- **Stewart McKillop to obtain testimonials from employers, staff and students and pass these to Martin Kirkwood in good time for the December meeting.**

5. Code of Practice

- Victoria Beattie spoke to paper 16, circulated in advance. She said the Sub-group's conclusion was that, rather than being too prescriptive, colleges should simply be encouraged to develop a Code of Practice that was in accordance with their own individual needs. Annex A therefore provided some guidance for colleges on what a Code of Practice might include.
- Marian Healy suggested there could be some mention of the PDF in the paper. Peter Beaumont said he would be happy for such a reference to be inserted although this was not the kind of issue that the PDF generally considered.
- It was agreed that the paper should be rephrased slightly to emphasise that the group was actually recommending that colleges should have a Code of Practice.
- Susan Bird felt that the principles laid out in Annex A might be more at home in the Staff Governance Standard. To her mind, a Code of Practice ought to have a more practical emphasis.
- Marian Healy suggested that any quotations from the leaflet 'Keeping Children Safe and Well' should be explicitly cross-referenced. Otherwise, the group was generally content with the contents of the paper and annex.
- It was agreed that a refined version of the Code of Practice recommendations and annex should be prepared. It was further agreed that Victoria Beattie would prepare the Sub-group's final recommendations paper and that the Code of Practice amendments would be included in this. It was expected that the recommendations paper would be discussed by the Sub-group at their December meeting and then presented to the full working group in early January.

ACTION

- **FAED to prepare the Sub-group's recommendations paper which would be discussed by the Sub-group at their December meeting and then presented to the full working group in early January.**

6. Staff Governance Standard for Further Education Colleges

- Col Baird and Marian Healy introduced Paper 17, circulated in advance. This matter had been remitted to the group from the FE Roundtable.
- Col said that while there wasn't the opportunity in the two remaining meetings for the group to finalise the standard, it was worth considering whether the group in principle wished the idea to be taken forward. He advised that he would also be seeking views on this from the Accountability and Governance group.

- The group agreed that the idea was worth taking forward in principle. However, rather than give the task to the ASC and STUC, it was agreed to return the proposal to the Roundtable.
- Susan Bird said that she would send a copy of Stevenson's own Staff Governance Standard to the Reviews Team.

ACTION

- **FAED to return idea of Staff Governance Standard to the Roundtable in due course.**
- **Susan Bird to send copy of Stevenson's Staff Governance Standard to the Reviews Team.**

7. Update on Professional Development Sub-group

- Peter Beaumont gave a brief verbal update on progress. The last Sub-group meeting had been held immediately prior to this one.
- The main item on the agenda had been an updated version of the teacher training costings paper. The group was likely to recommend a period of three years for the achievement of TQ(FE). However, the paper would have to be amended as it had failed to take account of the new student cohorts arriving each year. It was also planned that the paper should incorporate aspects of the Funding Council's work on CPD for all college staff and make explicit the assumptions of the group regarding remission and staff numbers. An updated version would be produced in time for the December meeting.
- Bill Harvey's final paper on the CPD pilot had also been discussed. This contained a number of recommendations, most of which the group had endorsed.
- Finally, the group had discussed whether there was scope to maintain the momentum of the Review by taking forward discrete aspects of the recommendations in advance of Spending Review money being allocated. Col Baird said that while there was always the possibility of moving existing monies around as required, it was difficult to envisage Ministers making any firm commitments prior to the actual Spending Review.
- Victoria Beattie had commenced work on the final report of the Sub-group. Hopefully a draft version would be available for the December meeting.
- The minutes of the last Sub-group meeting would be circulated to all members as soon as they had been approved.

ACTION

- **Costings paper to be updated for December meeting.**
- **Draft Sub-group report to be prepared for December meeting.**

8. Feedback from the Drafting Meeting

- Victoria Beattie spoke to the note of the meeting, circulated in advance.
- Members indicated that they were broadly content with the note.
- Victoria advised that the letters to ASC and STUC had already been issued.
- It was agreed that the drafting group could be convened again as required.

9. Any Other Business

- Marian Healy wondered if there was anything the group could say or recommend in respect of the recent announcement by Glasgow University that it planned, in partnership with Kaplan, a US education provider, to set up Glasgow International College, which will provide feeder courses for overseas students before they move on to the University of Glasgow. Col Baird said he didn't think so, although possibly the Strategic Futures group could make some reference to it. Various members also expressed concern that this might be part of a wider trend which could ultimately be damaging to colleges.
- Returning to the question of estates, Col said he thought another key issue was how improved estates made colleges better able to adapt to changes in the curriculum. He also confirmed that scenarios for the future of Scotland's colleges would be available for the next meeting, and that it was expected that each of the RoSCO working groups would test their recommendations against them.

List of Action Points

- **FAED to make available information on projected student populations in FE and HE.**
- **John Ireson to pass details of the experiences of disabled staff, including examples of good practice, to John McCann.**
- **John McCann to table paper highlighting the key messages from the Profile Report in time for the meeting on 14 December**
- **Stewart McKillop to obtain testimonials from employers, staff and students and pass these to Martin Kirkwood in good time for the December meeting.**
- **FAED to prepare the Sub-group's recommendations paper which would be discussed by the Sub-group at their December meeting and then presented to the full working group in early January.**
- **FAED to return idea of Staff Governance Standard to the Roundtable in due course.**
- **Susan Bird to send copy of Stevenson's Staff Governance Standard to the Reviews Team.**
- **Costings paper to be updated for December meeting.**
- **Draft Sub-group report to be prepared for December meeting.**

**Tom Craig
ETLLD-FAED
01 December 2006**