

Further Education Regional Board

07 May 2019, 12:30 to 16:00

Ness Walk, and by VC (Dial in code: 79668@uhi.ac.uk)

Attendees

Board members

Niall McArthur, Crichton Lang, David Patterson, Diane Rawlinson, Alan Simpson, Lydia Rohmer, Nicholas Oakley, Neil Stewart, Brian Crichton, Fiona McLean, Chris O'Neil, Michael Foxley, John Hutchison, Peter Graham, Ian Minty, Iain Macmillan, Seonag Campbell, Bruce Robertson, Su Engstrand, Gary Campbell, Murray Easton, Willie Scott, Wilf Weir, Peter Campbell, Donald Macbeath

Apologies received from: Clive Mulholland; Carroll Buxton; David Sandison; Andrew Campbell; Mary Andrew; John Ross Scott; Fiona Larg; Garry Coutts; John Ferguson; Blair Sandison; Linda Kirkland.

Action

Meeting minutes

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting and noted the apologies.

The Chair requested that items 4.11 National Bargaining Funding Update and 4.19 FE 2019/20 Indicative Budget Update be removed from the agenda -- and potentially be the subject of a special meeting of FERB -- due to these items not having yet been concluded.

 FERB AGENDA - May 2019.pdf

1.1. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

1.2. Notification of Any Other Competent Business

There was none.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1. Minute of the FERB meeting held on 11th February 2019


The minutes of the previous meeting were **approved** as an accurate record.

One member requested clarification on item 4.12, and in particular their understanding that the branding report would be issued to partner boards for consideration. The Chair noted an update on the branding report next stages and consultation phases was on the agenda, but that a precis of the slides from the branding workshop would be useful for circulation where appropriate and in line with phase 2 of the project. *[Discussed further under item 4.9]*

 FERB19-15 2.1 2019-05-07_09-45-31-MeetingMinutes.pdf

2.2. Matters Arising

Members discussed the matters arising, and noted that all were on the agenda or ongoing except for action 2; an update report on Knowledge Exchange and Innovation was requested for the next FERB meeting.

 FERB19-16 2.2 - Matters Arising.pdf

2.3. Review of Delegated Decisions

There were none.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chair gave his report and noted the following key updates:

1. Offshore renewables training. The Chair discussed what the region can offer based on what the region needs in the growing offshore renewables space. The Chair reported that engineering students on local projects were being trained in Hull and asked why this wasn't being done locally. Opportunities for the work-based learning hub to offer the university an advantage in scale should be seized, a coordinated effort by the university to attract and raise the profile of UHI amongst local projects, and cutting down the multiple points of contact were all agreed as important activities to help facilitate and meet training needs locally.
2. The Chair noted an action plan was being developed to improve veterans' access to the university, and asked for a partner chair volunteer to assist with coordinating opportunities.
3. Colleges Scotland are reviewing their capital plan; the Chair reported he was meeting with the Chief Operating Officer and Secretary as a review of the capital matrix assessment was now in order.

 FERB19-17 3 - Chairman s Report 070519.pdf

4. GOVERNANCE, PLANNING & FUNDING MATTERS

4.1. NMIS (National Manufacturing Institute Scotland)


Billie Scott gave a presentation on the NMIS.

Members asked how UHI would be coordinating its response to NMIS activities and ensure how UHI's contributions and offering is properly communicated and considered. It was reported that HIE are well represented in the senior governance arrangements, sitting on both the programme board and involved in the workstreams.

Members agreed that there were plenty of good collaborative working opportunities and that these dovetailed with the university's involvement in City Deals, flexible workforce development etc., and members agreed to engage fully in a regional response to these. Perth College UHI made it clear that they would continue to act independently on the Tayside City Deal.

4.2. Final Regional Outcome Agreement 2019/20 - 2021/22

Members noted and discussed the regional outcome agreement (ROA). Feedback had been received from partners and the ROA had been submitted to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), where it is under review. Members noted that a minor change was made to a Higher Education target, and this will be circulated to partners alongside the SFC-approved final version.

 FERB19-18 4.2 - Regional Outcome Agreement 2019-20 - 2021-22.pdf

4.3. Northern Alliance

Members discussed the Northern Alliance update provided verbally by the Chair, who noted he had successfully lobbied to increase the UHI representation on the Northern Alliance Board. Executive representative had been requested at an earlier Partnership Council meeting, but volunteers were also being sought from non-executive partner boards. It was noted that Perth were already engaged in the process; and that Inverness College had nominated an executive (Roddy Henry).

Additional volunteers were invited to notify the Chair or the Clerk of their interest after the meeting.

The Chair took an action to check whether student representation on the Northern Alliance Board was possible.

4.4. Programme Board Update


The Deputy Principal, the Chair of the Assembly Programme Board (APB), gave an update on the APB's activities since the last FERB meeting. An assembly meeting was held on 26 April, where the working groups provided an update on their progress to date, with a view to demonstrating to the wider assembly community the case for change and the advantages to university stakeholders of working collectively, collaboratively, and transparently. It was also reported that an ongoing and more robust communications and feedback strategy was deemed imperative and to this end a roadshow around the partnership was planned. The working groups also noted that they were continuing to collate evidence and refine proposals for the scheduled summer Partner Board and University Court meetings.

The Deputy Principal reported that the APB expected the initial phase to take 2-3 years, and that the processes being established now will become embedded in the core of how the university operates. He closed by noting how pleased he was with the tone of discussion and direction displayed at the assembly meeting in particular but also in the wider working groups' consultation and evidence-collecting work.

FERB members queried the staff survey questions, and how the survey was developed. Members of the APB present noted that adjustments had been made and the final questionnaire was significantly updated from the original position.

4.5. STEM update

Su Engstrand gave members an update paper on STEM coordination. Members **agreed** that the SSA Leadership Board continues to take on a coordinating role, although that there is a need for this work to be strategic, cover the whole region (including the islands), and it needs both capacity and funding, with clear lines of accountability.

 FERB19-21 4.5 - STEM update.pdf

4.6. Curriculum Mapping Project Procurement Process Update

Members **noted** the update paper and that the project was currently being reprocured.

 FERB19-22 4.6 - Curriculum Mapping Tool update.pdf

4.7. Shetland Integration Project Update

Members **noted** the update paper. Both Boards have now agreed to progress with the merger, a programme board has been established, a project manager engaged, and a principal designate search underway.

 FERB19-23 4.7 - Shetland merger update.pdf

4.8. Lews Castle College Update

The members received and **noted** a verbal update on Lews Castle College from its Chair and Principal.

1. The proposal for a post to assist with the transformation of curriculum is currently going through university approval processes.
2. Additional funding was being sought to cover the islands allowance in light of the national bargaining activity.
3. The college is not currently in serious financial difficulty, but the wider assumption that this was the case had perhaps hampered local partnerships and developments.
4. The finance and general purposes committee has been re-established, and the learning, teaching and research committee will be re-established shortly. Board appointments have also been made recently.

I Macmillan took an action to speak to island-based colleagues to present the case for the islands allowance to be funded.

The FERB Chair took an action to assist LCC with communications with the SFC Chair.

4.9. Branding and Positioning Project Update

The Vice-Principal Tertiary (VP-T) gave an update on the branding and positioning project.


1. The proposal is to establish a simpler brand hierarchy, as the current brand is fragmented and confusing for students and stakeholders, and leading to missed opportunities for communicating benefits and advantages of UHI.
2. Separate engagement with SMO to be prioritised and mindful of the Gaelic language plan.
3. Members queried why a limited partner pilot was needed if this was already agreed. The VP-T reported that a full implementation had not yet been costed, and the pilot will be used to streamline and reduce costs as the process is iterative - the 'pilot' phase described in the paper may be better named a 'test' phase.
4. Members discussed some of the specific branding proposals, for instance the proposal to replace the word 'college' with 'campus'. There was a mixed reception to this specific proposal amongst FERB members.
5. Members agreed that it was critical there was full and comprehensive consultation and communication on any changes, and that feedback was listened to (including from partner boards). The marketing project team leader should be asked to write to all chairs on the proposed removal of the term 'college' in marketing, for instance, and chairs should be asked for feedback often and early.

 FERB19-25 4.9 - Branding and Positioning Project update.pdf

4.10. Dashboard Reporting Tool Project


Roddy Henry gave a presentation on and demonstration of the dashboard reporting tool. He noted it was useful to use the reports to analyse targets and developmental priorities and identify trends and insights. The tool is expected to go live in a limited form in June, with increasing functionality in the months following.

An update report on the dashboard reporting tool project was requested for the September or November FERB meeting.

 FERB19-26 4.10 - FERB data reporting tool paper April 2019.pdf


4.11. National Bargaining Funding Update

Item deferred - see item 1.

 FERB19-27 4.11 - National Bargaining Funding update.pdf

4.12. Student Activity Monitoring Report

Members noted the update report and heard that it would be a challenge to meet core and ESIF credit targets, with the current regional shortfall of around 5400. All partners are attempting to deliver more in order to make up the shortfall. Forecast shortfall is around 1700 credits, but partners are planning extra effort that, if delivered, should mean the university meets core and ESIF targets.

 FERB19-28 4.12 - Student Activity Monitoring.pdf


4.13. Single Policy Environment Project Update: Phase 2

Members noted the report and the project's focus, following feedback, on the carbon emissions policy.

 FERB19-29 4.13 - Single Policy Update -Apr2019.pdf

4.14. Highlands and Islands Work-Based Learning Hub Updates

Members noted the update and that targets were reached; [a presentation update was requested for the September FERB meeting.](#)

 FERB19-30 4.14 - WBL Hub Update FERB May 2019.pdf

4.15. Evaluative Report and Enhancement Planning - Outcomes of Education Scotland moderation process

Members noted the update and that UHI has several of the highest performing Colleges in Scotland.

 FERB19-31 4.15 - EREP Endorsed Grades.pdf

4.16. Flexible Workforce Development Fund Update

Members noted the update.

 FERB19-32 4.16 - Flexible Workforce Development Fund Update.pdf

4.17. Summary of FFR 2018 assumptions

Members noted the paper and discussed the context of the report. In particular, some members requested that there be university standards, based on SFC guidance, for a standard set of assumptions that all partners subscribe to. Members asked that responsibility for determining the majority (if not all) of the assumptions should originate from or be agreed centrally, preferably by the Finance Directors Practitioners' Group.

The Director of Corporate Resources noted that this wouldn't change the overall trend of partners forecasting either increasing deficits or reducing surpluses. He also noted that it would be difficult or even counterproductive to dictate to individual colleges standard assumptions in practice, but that guidance could be provided before the next round of FFRs.

 FERB19-33 4.17 - Summary FFR 2018 assumptions.pdf

4.18. SFC Mid-Year Forecast Return 2018/19 Summary Report

Members noted the report.

 FERB19-34 4.18 - SFC Mid Year return 2018-19.pdf

4.19. FE 2019/20 Indicative Budget Update

Item deferred - see item 1.

 FERB19-35 4.19 - Revised Indicative 2019-20 allocations.pdf

5. AUDIT, RISK MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

5.1. Risk Management - FE Risk Register and UHI HLRR

Members noted and discussed the risk register and in particular the newly identified 'standard' risks emerging from the risk workshops.

Members queried where items such as the student residences, which was a significant risk and major concern to both their respective board and the work of FERB, was represented on the risk register or the common risks. This was noted as the responsibility of the university Court and as such only included on the university's high level risk register, rather than the FE risk register.

[Members therefore requested visibility of the overall university high level risk register, for information, in conjunction with the FE risk register for greater visibility for future meetings.](#)

5.2. Academic Partners Financial Status Reports

Members noted and discussed the financial status reports. Some members stated that the report, although data rich, was missing a clear analysis or evaluation. Further work on better articulation or narrative around the RAG statuses or similar was suggested as a starting point to provide members more assurance. Members also requested improved trend analysis as a means to identify future issues or risks, with a view to receiving a recommendation or options appraisal on potential mitigation strategies.

The Chair took an action to discuss possible improvements to the financial reports with the Chair of Court.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:

The Chair noted that items 4.11 National Bargaining Funding Update and 4.19 FE 2019/20 Indicative Budget Update may require a special meeting before the next scheduled meeting on 3 September 2019.

7.1. 3 September 2019

7.2. 7 November 2019

8. Close of meeting

There was no other business and the Chair adjourned the meeting at 16:40.