Further Education Regional Board

11 February 2019, 13:45 to 16:00
Ness Walk Inverness

Attendees

Board members

Clive Mulholland , Fiona Larg , Niall McArthur , Crichton Lang , Diane Rawlinson , Alan Simpson , Linda Kirkland , Brian Crichton , Fiona McLean , O'Neil Chris , Michael Foxley (Chair) , Lydia Rohmer , David Sandison , Sonag Campbell , Wilf Weir , Peter Campbell , Peter Graham , Garry Coutts , Bruce Robertson , Rosemary McCormack , Iain Macmillan , John Wilson , Blair Sandison , Beverley Clubley , John Hutchison , Christine Shaw (Clerk)

Meeting minutes

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting.

Apologies were received from: Neil Stewart, Angus Macleod, Carrol Buxton, Ian Minty, John Ferguson and John Ross Scot.

📄 FERB AGENDA - Feb 2019.pdf

1.1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.2. Notification of Any Other Competent Business

There was no other competent business declared.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1. Minute of the FERB meeting held on 21st November 2018

Members resolved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as an accurate record.

📄 FERB18-61 2.1 - 2018-12-13_12-41-33-MeetingMinutes.pdf

2.2. Matters Arising

Members reviewed the matters/actions arising paper.

1.2 Innovation, Knowledge Exchange and College Innovation Fund – Presentation by Dr Joe Irvine. It was noted that FERB would require a progress report at the next meeting.

📄 FERB19-01 Matters Arising.pdf

2.3. Review of Delegated Decisions

None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Michael Foxley

The Chair advised that the majority of the items that he wished to highlight to members would be addressed and discussed within the substantive items on the meeting agenda, however, there were three points that he wished to make;

1. **Consistency of reporting across the partnership.** There was a clear need to enhance and increase the consistency of data reporting and information flows across the partnership between academic partners and the University centre. This was important to aid regional planning and inform decisions. The Chair encouraged members to actively promote and encourage enhancements in this area.
2. **Governance Working Group - Colleges Scotland -** despite concerns about the size of College Boards, the Chair argued successfully for both Staff as well as Union representation.
3. **Remuneration of Chairs** - the possible remuneration of college board chairs had been discussed at the Equality & Diversity in Governance meeting last month. This was something that the group was keen to progress as a potential mechanism for encouraging more women to apply to serve as chairs on Boards. It was noted that the Chair would consult directly with Colleges Scotland on this matter and provide a report via the COOS in due course.

    ACTION: Chair

4. GOVERNANCE, PLANNING & FUNDING MATTERS

4.1. National Bargaining Update

Diane Rawlinson

Members received an update on the National Bargaining developments in relation to the position of the Scottish Funding Council. Two main issues were highlighted: i) The current status of partners in relation to the national Recognition and Procedures Agreement (nPRA) and ii) Funding to support National Bargaining arrangements. FERB requested more information from SFC regarding the financial outlook for colleges and agreed that it would be desirable to have dialogue with SFC on this matter.

The Chair of Moray College read out a prepared statement highlighting a number of concerns about the processes and procedures applied by the University for determining, allocating and distributing grant funding to the assigned colleges including an assertion that the University may be withholding or delaying payments that were due to Moray College. These allegations and assertions were wholly refuted and it was noted that the University Principal and Vice Chancellor would meet with the Chair and Vice Chair of Moray College to discuss these concerns and to clarify matters.

Action: PVC

📄 FERB19-02 4.1 - National Bargaining update.pdf

4.2. Draft Regional Outcome Agreement 2019/20 – 2021/22

Diane Rawlinson

It was noted that consultations would be progressed locally with local authorities and CPP partners before the end of March.

The requirement for academic partners to consult locally with staff, students, trades unions and CPP partners, in particular local authorities, was drawn to the attention of academic partner Chairs. This consultation was to take place before the end of March 2019/

Action: Academic Partner Chairs.

📄 FERB19-03 4.2 - Draft Regional Outcome Agreement 2019-20 - 2021-22.pdf

4.3. Management of Regional Outcome Agreement targets 2019/20

Diane Rawlinson

FERB reviewed the Management of Regional Outcome Agreement targets 2019/20. It was noted that these had previously been considered and endorsed by the Partnership Council.

As the whole process of hitting SFC targets is becoming more challenging FERB agreed that it is necessary to have some clear plans in place and a more strategic approach to the management of Regional Outcome Agreement targets in order to achieve greater clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities.

The Vice Principal Further Education proposed a degree of dis-aggregation of ROA targets while continuing to promote collaborative effort and regional strategic planning of enhancement initiatives. FERB approved the suggested approach to ROA development and target-setting for implementation in 2019/20.

📄 FERB19-04 4.3 - ROA Approach to Management of Targets.pdf

4.4. Programme Board Update

Crichton Lang

The Deputy Principal UHI, provided an update on the activities of the Programme Board which had met on 4th and 5th February 2019 for a formal meeting/networking session. The four established working groups, namely: Governance and accountability; Staff development and progression; Student equivalence and experience; Finance sustainability and efficiency are now beginning to formulate particular lines of enquiry for specific proposals which will go to the Programme Board collectively in June 2019.

It was noted that each of the working groups are taking a different approach to the specific proposals towards operational change. It is important that we give a positive central message about what we are trying to achieve throughout the process.

The next Partnership Assembly will take place in April 2019

4.5. Student Activity Monitoring Report

Diane Rawlinson

FERB were presented with an update on 2018/19 Student Activity monitoring for FE student activity and progress towards activity targets. The report highlighted the current position as being behind that of a similar time last year and sought assurance from Academic Partners that the year-end estimates continue to be valid.

🗎 FERB19-05 4.5 - Student Activity Monitoring Report.pdf

4.6. STEM update

Gary Campbell

The University's Vice Principal Strategic Developments provided FERB with an overview on current developments with STEM initiatives.

The STEM Strategy, launched by the Scottish Government in 2018, was envisaged to be led by a regional hub (university or college) and involve the remaining colleges in network with other institutions such as schools, councils and SDS, however, there is currently no funding for this work. When UHI was approached by the SFC to set up a regional network, the situation was complicated as there is already such a partnership in place, the SSA. This left us with three choices: 1. Develop a college based network, ignoring the existing SSA and run the UHI Regional network in parallel. 2. Ask the SSA to act as the regional network for the UHI region 3. Develop a UHI STEM network and then present this as a strong voice within the existing SSA. In consultation with the SFC, SSA, Partnership Council it was agreed to adopt option 3. Dr Sam Clark will be working under the new Dean of Faculty Dr Sue Engstrand to grow the internal UHI college network and to develop our own STEM strategy as part of the wider regional offer. It was noted that we need to ensure that the SSA has a responsibility beyond the UHI region and have a wider agenda.

Following the workshop hosted by the SFC at Moray College last year regarding the regional STEM network, GC agreed to circulate a paper on the discussions that took place, for information.

FERB agreed a full written update on developments for the FERB meeting in May.

ACTION: GC

🗎 FERB19-06 - STEM update.pdf

4.7. Shetland Integration Project Update

Peter Campbell

As noted at the last meeting, the business case for merger was presented to Shetland Islands Council and the Board of Trustees at NAFC on the 10th December 2018, when the decision was approved unanimously. UHI is to progress the Project Manager role. There is currently no specific timeline in place to appoint the shadow board. It will be the role of the shadow board to fulfil the project management and recruit the principal designate. The target vesting date is 6th January 2020.

4.8. Single Policy Environment Project Update: Phase 2

Diane Rawlinson

FERB discussed the single policy environment project. It was noted that during Phase 1, policies were all student-facing but drew upon a wide range of practitioners including finance teams, student support teams, quality managers and academic staff. Spreading the workload across a number of separate teams, in this way, enabled progress to be made concurrently across several policy fronts. The outputs of this work are proving to be of benefit to many teams in each academic partner, not least the development of constructive communities of practice.

In adopting a similar approach to Phase 2, that is, concurrently developing policies across diverse teams, the project can make good progress without placing an undue burden on any one team. This would replicate a process that has proved to be effective in Phase 1 while bringing additional teams into the project work.

Referring to standardisation and consistency across the partnership, FERB were content with the proposed approach that policies are concurrently developed across each of the policy areas (outlined in the paper) in order that the project can continue to make good progress.

FERB approved the proposal.

🗎 FERB19-07 4.8 - Single Policy Environment Project PHase 2.pdf

4.9. Highlands and Islands Work-Based Learning Hub Update

FERB noted the Highlands and Islands Work-Based learning Hub update paper.

🗎 FERB19-08 4.9 - WBL Hub Update FERB Feb 2019.pdf

4.10. Evaluative Report and Enhancement Planning – Outcomes of Education Scotland moderation process

Diane Rawlinson

FERB received an overview of EREP outcomes of Education Scotland moderation process that raises issues of inconsistency in its approach. The paper proposed using closer working amongst partners in EREP production and grade proposals, as part of the work to harmonise quality management processes to lever greater consistency in Education Scotland guidance for future years. The paper also outlined the intended approach for Education Scotland engagement for the next 12 months.

🗎 FERB19-09 4.10 - Evaluative Report and Enhancement Planning.pdf

4.11. Flexible Workforce Development Fund Update

FERB noted the Flexible Workforce Development Fund update paper.

🗎 FERB19-10 4.11 - Flexible Workforce Development Fund.pdf

4.12. Branding report

Lydia Rohmer

Lydia Rohmer reported that broad agreement reached at Partnership Council that we need to simplify our brand framework was also approved at the Pre-FERB Branding workshop this morning. This means in practice that we can now start to move the brand framework forward in a meaningful and opportune way as part of the strategy and cement particular markets.

5. AUDIT, RISK MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

5.1. Risk Management - FE Risk Register and UHI HLRR

The COOS reported that the new SharePoint system is up and running and we have received some useful feedback with the general acceptance that a transfer of risk information to SharePoint has improved reporting.

🗎 FERB19-12 5.1 Risk management-1.pdf

5.2. Academic Partners Financial Status Reports

Niall McArthur

FERB received an overview of the key financial information from Academic Partners' that receive public funding from both the RSB and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The financial data has come from the various financial returns that are submitted to the SFC/ UHI and all figures have been reviewed by the relevant Academic Partner finance teams.

🗎 FERB19-13 5.2 - Academic Partners Financial Monitoring Reports.pdf

5.3. Colleges Scotland Capital Expenditure Survey

Niall McArthur

FERB received a summary of the Colleges Scotland Capital Expenditure Survey on ICT Expenditure. Members agreed it was useful as it highlighted the pressures across the partnership.

🗎 FERB19-14 5.3 -Summary of the Colleges Scotland Cap Exp Survey on ICT Exp.pdf

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS: 7 May 2019 – 11 am