

SUALL

Scottish Universities Association
for Lifelong Learning

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Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on Friday 12th February 2010 at the University of Stirling.

Present: Caroline Anderson (OU), Jim Bradley (Stirling), Danielle Bolle (Stirling), Jackie Dunne (UALL), Lesley Hart (Strathclyde), Theresa Hoare (Glasgow), Helen Martin (Glasgow Caledonian), Jane O'Rorke (UWS), Donald Paterson (Aberdeen), Geraldine Prince (Edinburgh College of Art), Rod Purcell (Glasgow), Kaye Stevenson (Dundee)

Apologies: Lucy Bate (UALL), Pete Cannell (OU), Neil Croll (Glasgow), Con Gillen (Edinburgh), Graeme Ligertwood (SAC), Alex MacLennan (chair), Anne McGillivray (UWS), Lea McKay (UWS), Margaret Mill (Edinburgh Napier), Iain Morrison (UHI), David Smith (Glasgow Caledonian), Raymond Thomson (Strathclyde), Hilary Westwood (Scottish Government), George Wilson (Edinburgh Napier)

In attendance: Rikki Gutcher (Aberdeen)

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were accepted as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

a) Student funding

A number of institutions reported that ILA numbers were up substantially. Membership of the LLL Directorate's 'Ginger Group' had been increased to include Theresa Hoare and Keith Mackle.

It had been announced that the pilot programme of support for part time postgraduate students would be continued.

b) Website

Rikki Gutcher had attended the meeting to report on the status of the website update. Members were asked to forward suggestions for publications that could go on and to have a look at whether there were any obvious gaps in the information provided. It was agreed that it would be useful to have a link to sources of learning and to add UALL items to the events page. The contacts database did not work and it was agreed that a simple searchable document would be more useful. Sub group secretaries should send minutes etc to Rikki (copied to Donald) for uploading to the site.

3. Search for a new Chair

Professor MacLennan had indicated that he would be standing down at the AGM. A discussion ensued about the qualities that were sought for this position. It was agreed that

members should forward to the Secretary names of suitable candidates who could be approached. The Secretary and the Vice-Chair would then consider these names and make a selection. It was also noted that a new Vice-Chair would be required, following Lesley Hart's decision to take early retirement.

4. Reports from Sub-Committees

a) Widening Participation in HE.

Jane O'Rorke had taken over as chair of this group. They had encountered difficulties in the last two years in collecting WP data for the statistics leaflet but would have another push for the 08/09 data. Members were asked to advise of the best contact within their institution. The group were keeping a watch on a number of national developments which may impinge on WP activities eg WARP funding review, Fora funding, Learning for All.

b) Management and Administration

The last meeting had been poorly attended. It had been agreed to set up a joint meeting with the WP group and the KILTS group to look at common issues, particularly funding. This had now been arranged for Friday 14th May at ECA. It was suggested that Hilary Westwood be invited to attend this.

c) Research

The chair of this sub group had asked for some advice from Council on what it should be trying to achieve. The general feeling was that it was worth trying to get it going again, to help with supporting impact and knowledge exchange elements in the REF. Another idea was to act as a clearing house/facilitator to match people up for joint projects or to bring in missing expertise. Institutions would be contacted to suggest suitable members. It was noted that the UALL Research Committee was facing similar problems and Council recommended that Pete Cannell should contact John Holford at Nottingham who chairs this committee. The research sub-group would be invited to join with the other sub-groups at their joint meeting.

d) KILTS

This group had a case study presentation from UWS at its last meeting. Areas that were being looked at were developing community programmes with FE colleges and qualifications for lifestyle courses. It was noted that CPD potentially covered a very broad area and Council members were urged to suggest suitable members from across the board.

5. Reports from Universities

Aberdeen: Every programme was being re-validated so a push would be made to have flexible learning available in all of them. It was feared that there would be no intake from summer school students as part time students were no longer required to fill places. This was expected to be a short term demographic blip and it would be essential to keep these avenues open.

Dundee: The budget was being reduced by up to 30%. Much of the work was moving out of CE into central services under the branding of public engagement.

ECA: Merger talks had been initiated with the University of Edinburgh. The use of ILAs had led to an enormous change in the social mix of students on their programmes. Links with the Gulf were being strengthened and prospects for growth were excellent.

Edinburgh Napier: There was now no CE or LLL department so George Wilson and Margaret Mill were in discussion about their continued membership of SUALL.

Glasgow: The Faculty of Education will be a School of Education within a College of Social Sciences in the new structure for the university to be in place for August. The huge cut in teacher training numbers would lead to a considerable downsizing in the Faculty and may affect the LLL provision. Enrolments were good and students were happy but there was not a good fit with the university strategy, although there was a commitment to community engagement.

Glasgow Caledonian: Staff remits within CRLL had been revised and there was a move to draw some learner support activities closer to CRLL and work on FE articulation links.

OU Scotland: The impact of the ELQ legislation in England meant that £30M pa savings had to be found throughout the organisation. Transitional funding was available so the full effect would not be felt until 2013/14. Another HNC/D agreement had been signed. The Director's post had not been filled and would be re-advertised.

Stirling: Some departments were merging and there would be an impact from the teacher training reductions although less than elsewhere due to the structure of the degree.

Strathclyde: Re-structuring was almost complete. Operationally, things were very successful.

UALL: Jackie reported on the situation in England. Big funding cuts were expected, perhaps up to 25%. There was a growing emphasis on employer engagement and economically suitable courses. The fees review was expected to lift the cap, perhaps to £7,000. There had been further erosion of the old liberal adult education programmes and non credit bearing short courses were now practically extinct. The Mandelson report had lots of references to fair access and social mobility but the funding mechanism was unclear. However, departments continued to re-invent themselves and some institutions were supportive. Several of the workshops at the forthcoming annual conference were being offered by Scottish members. Next year's conference would be held in Stirling and the AGM in Cardiff.

UWS: The new structure was settling down and there was a LLL presence throughout faculty management. Work was being done on looking at the impact of CLD activities in S Ayrshire compared with N Ayrshire. WP activities continue with schools (Forum work following on from GOALS) and the Care Leavers Forum.

6. Discussion:

Members debated whether there was any merit in a collegiate future for SUALL eg to develop some shared policy on the public engagement strand of the REF. The idea of redirecting unsuccessful applicants for full time places to the local LLL provision was also discussed. It was thought that this would be a good way of keeping students engaged with learning but there would be a number of practical issues, eg with UCAS, to overcome.

7. Date of next meeting: Friday 11th June at the Scottish Agricultural College, Ayr