

# SUALL

Scottish Universities Association  
For Lifelong Learning

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## Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2008 at UHI Millennium Institute Executive Offices, Inverness

### Present:

Mike Allardice (Dundee), Fiona Andrews (Glasgow), Brian Findsen (Glasgow), Lesley Hart (Strathclyde), Theresa Hoare (Glasgow), Alex MacLennan (UWS), Iain Morrison (UHI), Donald Paterson (Aberdeen), Alex Rougvie (St Andrews), Raymond Thomson (Strathclyde)

### Apologies:

Muriel Alexander (UWS), Pete Cannell (OU), Alison Dix (UHI), Richard Dockrell (Stirling), John Field (Stirling), Jim Gallacher (Glasgow Caledonian), Con Gillen (Edinburgh), Lesley Gunn (RGU), Graham Ligertwood (SAC), Hazel Knox (UWS), Anne McGillivray (UWS), Jill McKay (Dundee), Helen Martin (Glasgow Caledonian), Margaret Mill (Napier), Jennie Paul (Napier), Geraldine Prince (ECA),

### Attending:

Lucy Bate (UALL), Gordon Webb (GSA)

Members were welcomed by the Principal, Professor Bob Cormack, who then gave an interesting presentation on the past, current and future activities of UHI.

## 1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were approved.

## 2. Matters Arising

### a. *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy*

Lesley Hart had sent a letter to Mark Batho but no response had yet been received. Fiona Andrews would be seeing him at a meeting so would prompt him.

### b. *UALL Awards Scheme for Good Practice*

This proposal had been considered at the UALL Executive Committee meeting. Some people had been very enthusiastic, others felt that it would be too much work and some disagreed in principle with awards. A short life working group, comprising Lesley, Stella Cottrell, Brian O'Callaghan and Sue Oosthuizen was set up to bring a more detailed paper to the next meeting. A brief report would be given at the York conference. Council members were asked to provide information to Lesley on other relevant awards schemes.

### 3. Chair's Business

Professor MacLennan brought to the attention of members a conference on the SCQF and credit rating being run in Edinburgh on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

### 4. Reports from Sub-Committees

#### a. *Widening Participation in HE*

It was reported that there had been a good attendance at the recent sub-group meeting. It was noted that there had still been no response from the SFC on the WARP reports. Business and operational plans for the Forums had been submitted to SFC for Phase 3 and funding allocations had not been confirmed as yet. Phase 2 Forum Projects were currently funded to the end of July and there was concern among staff about the future, although the North Forum had been told that funding would be not less than that received last year. In the West of Scotland major changes were expected in Phase 3 for the GOALS Project.

#### b. *Management and Administration of Lifelong Learning (MAULL)*

There had been a very interesting presentation about the 'Discover Learning' project, which was run jointly by Dundee University, Abertay University, Dundee College and Dundee City Council. It is community-based adult learning, with learning outcomes but non threatening targets. It aims to respond to community requests and to get people back in to learning within their communities.

A number of members had attended a seminar at which the new ILA500 scheme had been explained. A grant of £500 for part time students is to be introduced for session 08/09, replacing the current loan. It will be administered under a simplified ILA model and will be available to all students earning less than £18,000 and taking at least 50% of a full time load. £1M of hardship funds will also be ring-fenced for part-time students. The Q&A session had identified some operational issues so it had been suggested that a group from SUALL compile some scenarios for them about real part-time student life to see that their policy and guidelines could deal with all the issues identified. It was agreed that Donald, Theresa, Anne and someone from UHI would work on this but that all members would be asked to send ideas, either from themselves or other colleagues more involved with student finance. Hazel Rutherford and Gerry McNamara from the ILA team had been invited to attend the next meeting of MAULL. This next meeting would be held on the same day as the WPHE meeting to allow for a joint session on Advising within Lifelong Learning.

#### c. *Research*

The group had run a seminar on Effective Research Interview Techniques which had been oversubscribed, so may be run again. The committee was struggling to keep members involved so would look at video and web conferencing options as well as opening up membership to English institutions.

#### d. *KILTS*

The inaugural meeting of this group was held in January. There are problems in identifying the appropriate people within each institution as CPD is handled in various different ways. The convener would contact the UALL CPD convener for advice on strategy. It was not obvious who the appropriate person to liaise with in the Scottish Government was. Alex MacLennan would ask Fiona Hyslop when he saw her and similarly Fiona Andrews would ask Mark Batho.

## 5. Reports from Universities

*UHI:* Fiona Hyslop had opened a number of learning centres; there were now 186 locations linked via PCs. This initiative fits well with the rural learning strand of the skills strategy. The Institute is involved in a student progression project and aims to boost student numbers by 50% by 2014 while retaining the students they already have. The WARP report had been submitted; there were some data quality problems but were convinced they were using the funding wisely.

*Dundee:* The university was still in financial crisis and CE was being hit; although they drew back from privatising the language courses, everything has to be self-financing. Another 85 staff have to go, on top of the 180 already identified. Widening Access activities have now moved to the recruitment service. The student induction process is being revamped to make it more cheery.

*Aberdeen:* Julie McAndrews had left and the department had been reviewed. A number of projects previously within the remit had been taken away and the department was now concentrating on flexible and distance learning. The plan was to use a system of champions to embed the work in departments more; for example recording lectures given to full time students and putting these on the web for part time students.

*Strathclyde:* The Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Studies had received funding of £300K pa for three years. Ten roadshows had been organised to launch the centre, with over 200 people attending the Glasgow one. The Centre for Lifelong Learning would be reviewed in April/May; the external assessors appointed were Leni Oglesby and Russell Moseley. It was expected that three or four options would be presented in the final report but the status quo had been ruled out. Key issues to be considered were what doing, why doing and who benefits. CPD was also being reviewed throughout the university. The level of understanding by senior management of the importance of lifelong learning on the European agenda was not good.

*UWS:* There were pressures on the Centre for Lifelong Learning to meet the extra numbers required by the recruitment challenges.

*St Andrews:* Continuing Education has been renamed the extension programme. It had been de-merged from admissions and was looking for new premises. The summer programme and languages were very buoyant. A proposal to add an honours component to the evening degree programme had been rejected but would be re-submitted at some point.

*Glasgow:* It was noted that Glasgow had been named Sunday Times Scottish University of the Year. Brian Findsen was leaving DACE to return to New Zealand. His post would not be replaced until the faculty's financial situation had improved. There was also some uncertainty over the headship of the department; Robert Hamilton would be acting head until the end of May, followed by Rod Purcell for one year initially. A research review of the department had identified a need to increase both the number of grants held by staff and the financial contribution received from them. It was also essential to increase the number of PhD students from the current 4 or 5 to between 20 and 30. Ten out of thirteen eligible staff had been returned in the RAE and Mike Osborne, who joined the department in February, was expected to take a lead in developing research collaborations. A case had been put forward to the VP T&L for DACE to be the base for all undergraduate part time study. The BEd degree was being reviewed and it was proposed that these students take DACE CertHE courses as part of their curriculum. The university's KPIs called for under-represented groups to be increased. There had been a fall in applications but this was probably attributable to the change in the UCAS choices from 6 to 5. Donor funds (£1,000 pa for four years) would enable a number of talent awards to be provided to those with good academic

attainment suffering financial hardship. Planning for the Phase 3 Forum activities was quite intensive. The BAICE conference, on the theme of Internationalisation, would be hosted by Glasgow on 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **6. UALL Conference York 17/18 March**

Members were reminded about this. Lucy Bate reported that it had been decided not to invite Mark Batho to speak again but noted that Janet Lowe, Chair of the Funding Council's Skills Committee, would contribute a session. It was reported that the UALL AGM might take place at a joint conference with EUCEN in Barcelona on 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> November.

#### **7. AOCB**

*a. Website:* it was felt that we were under-selling ourselves and that a re-vamp was needed. Theresa would approach Lucy to see if this was something she could help with as part of the agreed 2 days per month of her time for SUALL activities

*b. Farewell:* Good wishes were given to Professor Findsen; he was thanked for the contribution he had made to the work of SUALL.

#### **8. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 5 June 2008, University of Edinburgh

Theresa Hoare, Hon Secretary SUALL  
7 April 2008