

# SUALL

## Widening Participation in Higher Education Sub -Committee

Tuesday 25 January 2005  
University of Stirling

### DRAFT Note of Meeting

#### 1 Welcome and Apologies

**Present:** Fiona Andrews, University of Glasgow (Chair)  
Helen Martin, Glasgow Caledonian University  
Keith Mackle, University of Dundee  
Jonathan Staal, University of Abertay  
Lesley Gunn, Robert Gordon University  
Jill McKay, University of Dundee  
Jane O'Rorke, University of Paisley  
Lucy MacLeod, Napier University  
Kevin Brosnan, University of Stirling  
Stan Farrow, University of St Andrews  
Raymond Thomson, University of Strathclyde  
John Blicharski, University of Dundee

**Apologies:** Hazel Knox, University of Paisley  
Claire Campbell, Bell College  
Julie McAndrew, University of Aberdeen  
Richard Fearn, Glasgow Caledonian University

Welcome John Blicharski was welcomed to his first meeting of WPHE

#### 2 Report Of Meeting 5 October 2004

Accepted as an accurate record.

#### 3 Matters Arising

##### 3.1 Statistical Returns

The chair reported that she and Hazel Knox had met to review the statistical returns submitted by institutions. She reported that only 11 institutions had submitted returns and that one institution had indicated their intention not to complete a return. It was agreed that this response was disappointing, as previous summaries had attracted considerable attention. Members were asked to ensure that any missing returns were submitted asap. Some concern was expressed that missing returns would skew statistics. It was agreed that the Chair would raise the issue at the next Council meeting and request Council members to encourage institutions reluctant to provide information to take part in this activity.

**ACTION: Fiona Andrews**

### 3.2 SUALL Booklet

The Chair reminded members of the intention to publish the information collated from the Access Statistical returns in a booklet form. Members suggested that the information should be provided in the form of case studies, highlighting success stories and should be people focused.

The Chair reported that Universities Scotland had recently produced a similar publication. Both she and Hazel had spoken to Una Bartley to indicate their willingness to collaborate with Universities Scotland on the production of the publication, however timescales had prevented this.

Members welcomed the publication and appreciated the efforts involved in its production but expressed a number of concerns.

Firstly that the information contained in the publication did not reflect the extent of access activities occurring within institutions and that it wasn't a realistic 'snap shot' of activity. They noted that although all institutions had been invited to provide information only some of the activity had been selected for inclusion. Members were concerned that there was no clear indication within the publication that selection had occurred, or how activities had been selected, or that huge chunks of activity were not included. It was also noted that the publication contained no statistical information. Members stated that without the inclusion of adequate explanation a very skewed impression of the extent of access activity would be created.

It was agreed that the chair would discuss this with Una Bartley to express these concerns raised by members of the WPHE sub committee.

John Blicharski also agreed to raise the concern at the next meeting of the Universities Scotland Social Inclusion Group.

**ACTION: Fiona Andrews  
John Blicharski**

Members suggested that an event, aimed at policy and decision makers within the Scottish Executive and Funding Councils, could be organised to raise awareness of the extent of access activities undertaken by HEI's. This event would not conflict with any SWARF activity as these are aimed at practitioners. It was agreed that the chair would suggest this at the next Council meeting and also write to Una Bartley to suggest this.

**Action Fiona Andrews**

This suggestion led to further discussion about the information to be included in the SUALL Booklet. It was agreed that institutions would be asked to review the information submitted and that an additional box be provided to clarify awareness raising activities such as GOALS and LEAPS. Some institutions had included these activities under other headings. Members indicated that activities should only be counted once and that there was important to ensure no double counting occurred. One suggestion was that these activities could be included under the heading "Early Years Activity."

The group discussed how these activities should be recorded and it was agreed that institutions should be requested not to report on collaborative projects but that the project co-ordinators for these activities could be asked to provide a report.

Members agreed that the production of the booklet should go ahead if the number of returns submitted is similar to last year and that a small working group should be set up to assist in the production of this publication. It was also agreed that a request should be made to Margaret Dundas, as National Co-ordinator, for a small amount of funding to assist in the production of the booklet. Any recommendations from this group will be e-mailed to members.

**Working Group Representatives:** Fiona Andrews, Hazel Knox, Jane O'Rourke, Lesley Gunn, Jill McKay.

### **3.3 Aim Higher**

The chair explained the background to and the purpose of the Aim Higher project.

## **4 SUALL Update**

### **4.1 Council Business**

Keith Mackle reported on the decision taken to change the name of UACE(S) to SUALL in line with the name change for the national body (UALL).

He also reported that the national body were pleased that Scottish institutions had decided remain under the national umbrella. Four Scottish representatives attend UALL council meetings:

Jim Gallacher, Keith Mackle, Julie McAndrew and Jean Barr.

HE indicated that Alex Neil had agreed to continue as chair of SUALL and that this decision was welcomed as it would afford continuity at SUALL Council.

He reminded colleagues that the UALL National Conference would take place in Edinburgh between 21 –23 March and that the Administrators Conference would be held at Stirling University between 16 – 18 March and encouraged members to participate in both.

### **4.2 SUALL Website**

Keith reported that development of the website was well underway and indicated that the designer had done an excellent job, producing a very accessible web site. No decision had as yet been taken on publicity or a launch. It is intended that the website will be used to post information.

**Web address:**            **[suall.org.uk](http://suall.org.uk)**

### **4.3 Research sub-committee**

Keith reported that the first meeting of this group held on 24 January 2005, had been well attended and that Julie Preece, from Glasgow University had been elected chair. He indicated that most members of this group worked in the areas of widening participation, student support or student retention. He also indicated that the research activity of this group would not replicate activities taking place in existing research centres.

## **5 Points for Discussion**

### **5.1 FE/HE Articulation Developments**

The chair indicated that the funding councils were actively encouraging institutions to develop FE / HE articulation routes and had provided additional funding to support work in this area. She also indicated that institutions had been asked to report on the use of such funds. The chair invited members to comment.

A general discussion enabled members to report on the variety of strategies and activities adopted by institutions in making use of these funds. It was agreed that WPHE should continue to monitor and report on FE/HE activities.

### **5.2 Universities Scotland / Funding Council**

Members discussed representation from Universities Scotland and the Funding Council on WPHE sub committee. Members agreed that it would be inappropriate to invite individuals from Universities Scotland and the Funding Council to be full members of the WPHE sub committee but that when appropriate invitations to attend meetings would be extended.

### **5.3 Policy Developments**

Members were invited to bring to the agenda any policy developments that would be relevant to WPHE sub committee.

A HEFCE publication, “ Young Participation in higher education” Was brought to the attention of the group.

### **5.4 Future Meetings, Format and Developments**

Members agreed to keep the current format for meetings but suggested that seminars or presentations could be added when appropriate.

It is intended that in future, papers for meetings (agenda, minutes, etc.) will be posted on the website. It was agreed that a draft copy of the minutes would be sent to members for comment before being posted on the site. Thereafter members will only receive notification of the next meeting and should download the agenda and minutes from the website.

Members agreed that once the SHEFC, Widening Participation Report is published that this group should provide a formal comment.

## **6 Institutional Reports**

Members provided an update on institutional activity.

## **7 AOB**

Stan Farrow gave a brief report on the Fair Admissions Conference, held in December and the proposal to introduce a Post Qualifying Admission System. Members expressed some concerns at the proposed introduction of such a system. It was felt that the PQAS did not apply very well to the Scottish situation and would create difficulties. Initial concerns raised included;

- Summer School provision. - Many Summer School programmes contribute to their institutions admission process as well to the widening participation agenda.
- Clearing. - The PQA system may result in many more students having to use the clearing system and this could lead to a decline in student retention rates.
- International Students. – A summer application process may severely affect international students required to submit visa applications.

Members felt that Universities Scotland should be made aware of these concerns, in particular, any which may have implications for widening participation. It was suggested that the chair should request a copy of the Universities Scotland response to the proposal to introduce such a system. Fiona agreed to contact Una Bartley.

**Action                  Fiona Andrews**

## **8 Date of next meeting;**

**Tuesday 24 May 2005, Robert Gordon University.**