


**Unconfirmed Notes of RIE Committee Meeting
21 January 2011**

Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru Higher Education Funding Council for Wales		Disclosable
		Reference RIEC/11/09

Unconfirmed notes of the meeting of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Committee held on 21 January 2011 at the HEFCW offices, Cardiff

Present:

Members:

Professor Robin Williams (Chair)
Professor Peter Blood - Cardiff University
Ruth Brooks - representing Welsh Heads of Careers Services (WHECS)
Professor Richard Davies - representing Heads of Higher Education Wales (HEW)
Dr Steven Hill – Research Councils UK
Professor Brian Hobbs - University of Glamorgan
Geraint Jones - representing Network of Welsh Industrial Liaison Officers (WILOs)
Professor Dylan Jones-Evans – University of Wales
Sue Morgan – Welsh Assembly Government (DE&T)
Nina Park - HEFCW Council Member
Dr David Walker – Business representative
Professor Michael Woods - University of Aberystwyth

Officers:

Roger Carter - Head of Research Business & Communities
Teresa Cooper - Senior Economic Development Manager (Joint Secretary)
Dr Tove Oliver - Europe and International Manager
Dr Alyson Thomas - Senior Economic Development Manager

Observers:

Elizabeth Clarke - Higher Education Wales (HEW)
Dr Rachel Garside-Jones - Welsh Assembly Government (DCELLS)

Apologies

Nick Bodycombe - representing Network of Welsh European Liaison Officers (WELOs)
Simon Bradley – Business representative
Jackie Creswell-Griffith – GO Wales Programme Manager
Alastair Davies - Welsh Assembly Government (DE&T)
Professor Sir Brian Smith – HEFCW Council Member
Linda Tiller - Senior Research Manager (Joint Secretary)

2 Notes of the Meeting held on 12 October 2010

2.1 Subject to the amendment noted at paragraph 2.2 (d) below, the notes of the meeting held on 12 October 2010 were accepted as a true record.

2.2 The following matters arising from the last meeting were noted:

a) Note 2.2 – Foundation Degree Policy

Professor Dylan Jones-Evans raised the issue of potential ‘overlaps’ with the ESF foundation degree programme being led by the University of Glamorgan on behalf of HEW. Assurances were given that this was being managed within the assessment process and it was suggested that an update could be provided at the joint meeting of HEFCW’s RIE, SETQ and Reconfiguration and Collaboration Committees in May 2011.

b) Note 3.2 – Science Advisory Council for Wales

Inaugural appointments announced in November 2010 included two members of the RIEC, Professor Robin Williams and Dr Simon Bradley. Professor Williams reported on the outcomes of the Council’s first two meetings and looked forward to effective linkages between the Council and the RIEC. The Chair also noted that it was hoped to produce a draft outline of a revised WAG science policy before the elections in May 2011, with a final version to be produced afterwards.

c) 4.7 – HE- business interactions

Geraint Jones reported that he had looked into the reasons for the failure of the business approach made to HE in Wales, which was raised at the last meeting and discussed the repercussions of this failure with the WILOs network.

d) 4.9 – ERP Sector Panels

It was noted that the re-structuring of the Department of Economy and Transport referred to in this paragraph was due to be completed at the end of November 2010 and not November 2011. Roger Carter noted that HEFCW had now been invited to make a presentation to the Creative Industries Sector Panel in February 2011 and anticipated similar invitations from further sector panels in due course.

e) 5.1 – Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research

HEFCW’s Chief Executive had now formally signed the Concordat reported at the last meeting.

3 Innovation & Engagement (I & E) Funding

3.1 Teresa Cooper introduced a paper that set out proposals for a new three year cycle of I & E funding to commence in the academic year 2011/12. Subject to

ratification by the Council on 27 January and the finalisation of HEFCW's budget by the Welsh Assembly Government in February 2011, it was proposed to make £8.2 million available for I & E funding in 2011/12 with £6 million to be allocated by formula and £2.2 million via a competitive bidding process.

- 3.2 The Committee considered the paper in some detail. It was noted that whilst the (anticipated) level of funding to be made available in 2011/12 might at first glance appear significantly higher than that for 2010/11, this was actually largely due to the decision to embed current Graham funding for part-time employer engagement activity within the I & E Fund. In this context, Professor Dylan Jones-Evans suggested that there might be scope for increasing the size of the overall fund via European funding assigned for the promotion of innovation, which had become available as a consequence of the WAG's new economic development strategy, *Economic Renewal: a new direction*. Roger Carter agreed to look into this possibility at a meeting he was arranging for senior colleagues with the Acting Director General of the Assembly's Department of Economy and Transport, James Price (now scheduled for 18 March 2011).
- 3.3 There were some concerns expressed over the proposed performance indicators to be included in the methodology for making formula allocations. However, given the breadth of the I & E agenda it was agreed that, on balance, a broad basket of indicators was merited. Sector representatives also endorsed the proposal that HEFCW should continue to use only data that institutions were already collecting and reporting within the I & E funding formula, and should avoid the imposition of new data collection burdens on institutions.
- 3.4 Members concluded that the Council should be advised that the Chair of the RIE Committee and the Chief Executive of HEFCW would now proceed to exercise the authority delegated to them in March 2010 to implement a new cycle of I & E funding from 2011/12, in line with the proposals discussed by the Committee.

4 Report of Research Sub-group

- 4.1 The Chair noted that the report from the sub-group was also being presented to Council on 27 January 2011 and that he would feed into that presentation the views on the sub-group report expressed by RIEC Members. The Chair then took the Committee through the report, inviting comments page by page.
- 4.2 Overall the report was extremely well received and the Committee strongly endorsed its conclusions and related actions. In the course of discussion, it was suggested that Council's attention might be drawn to the following points:
 - A need to set the report in the context of RCUK's latest funding settlement, which would mean a 3% contraction in cash terms for Research Councils, which would equate to a 12% contraction in volume terms. The upshot of this would mean that the Research Councils would need to look for ways to

'manage' a reduction in demand for their funding through an emphasis on high quality bids only.

- The potential disadvantages that would accrue to Wales if it was not successful in securing any Doctoral Training Centres (an approach which the Research Councils are moving towards) or if HEIs in Wales failed to act collaboratively in proposals to the Research Councils.
- A need to build WEFO into the proposed development of a more systematic and strategic interaction between HEFCW and key WAG departments to improve the identification of and responses to new and forthcoming European funding opportunities. It was noted that the structure of WHEB was currently being reviewed to give it a much more proactive role in future. The role of WAG's Enterprise Europe Network was also raised in this context.
- Consideration of whether or not WAG should take a more proactive role in supporting funding bids from Welsh HEIs, externally recognising the different circumstances that sometimes apply in policy terms post-devolution.
- The impact of the 'Welsh funding gap' on the capacity of HEIs in Wales to attract and retain world-class research staff.
- Implications for academic staff in terms of available time and training to write high quality bids. For example, how does the balance of time allocated to teaching and research in Wales compare with the balance in other parts of the UK?

4.3 As far as actions for the HE sector were concerned, attention was drawn to recent activity by HEW's PVC Research Group (including specific discussions with the Arts and Humanities Research Council; the production of an inventory of facilities and services across Wales, and more general engagement with WAG in relation to links with the Research Councils).

4.4 Members also suggested that an obvious omission in the sub-group report was a reference to the need for institutions to operate critical internal quality processes in relation to their research grant proposals and also to REF outputs.

5 Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy

5.1 The Committee received from Sue Morgan a presentation on the Assembly's new Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy (YES), which had been officially launched in November 2010. In particular, members were invited to note HEFCW's identification as a key partner for the delivery of the YES Action Plan and the role of HEIs in promoting an entrepreneurial mind-set in young people that extended far beyond self-employment and/or new business start-ups. Sue Morgan noted that the YES Action Plan extended to 2015 and was designed to deliver the *One Wales* commitment to "create and develop links between entrepreneurship and education". It aimed to build on progress already made in Wales (which has earned international recognition) and would also help deliver a key action within the Assembly's new economic development policy, *Economic Renewal: a new direction*.

5.2 The presentation was followed by a question and answer session in which attention was paid to the extent to which HEIs in Wales were embedding

entrepreneurship modules into their curricula – with business schools appearing amongst the least proactive in this area.

6 Draft Annual Report

- 6.1 The Committee received a draft, first annual report that covered the academic years 2008/09 to 2009/10. Members were invited to submit any suggested changes and/or additions to Teresa Cooper by the end of February 2011, prior to the submission of the report to Council in March 2011 and its subsequent publication on the Council's website.

7 WHEB/HE sector's response to the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) consultation on the Future of the European Framework Programme (FP8)

- 7.1 The Committee received for information a paper that presented a joint response submitted by Welsh Higher Education Brussels and Higher Education Wales to a UK-wide consultation by BIS on the future of FP8.

8 Recent Reports Relevant to Research and Engagement

- 8.1 The Committee received, for information, a paper relating to a number of recently-published reports which were relevant to the work of the Committee. This paper also drew attention to a number of websites, which might be of interest to members.

9 Minutes of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee held on 15 December 2010

- 9.1 The Committee received, for information, the Minutes of the meeting of the Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee held on 15 December 2010.

10 Dates of Future Meetings

- 10.1 It was noted that future meetings of the Committee would be held as follows:
- Monday, 16 May 2011 (Joint meeting with HEFCW's SETQ and Reconfiguration & Collaboration Committees at Cardiff University)
 - Tuesday, 28 June 2011
 - Thursday, 13 October 2011