



Précis and action points from the **Executive Council** meeting held on Friday 17 March in the Meeting Room, SUS offices, 3rd Floor, 48 Pleasance, Edinburgh.

Present

Jim Aitken (JCA), In the Chair
 Juliet Balfour (JB)
 Ross Campbell (RC)
 Osla Dougal (OD)
 Mike Fitchett (MF)
 Jamie Watson (JWat)
 James Williamson (JWil)

In attendance

Stewart Fowlie (SF)
 Dougie MacDonald (DMacD)

Apologies for Absence

Filippo Antoniazzi (FA)
 Raleigh Gowrie (RG)
 Lawrie Randak(LR)

ACTION

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND SCENE SETTING

1. Everyone was welcomed, and apologies for absence noted.

HOMOLOGATION

2. *Meeting of 23 January'06* – the précis of the 4th Executive Council meeting was reviewed and approved as an accurate record.

3. *Matters Arising:*

- a. Staff Appointments –The recent recruitment process for the Sport Programmes Manager and Executive Officer posts had generated widespread interest (53 and 35 applications respectively). Highly structured interviews had been held at UoE on Thursday 9 March'06, with five candidates being short-listed for the EO post, and four candidates for the SPM position. Two preferred applicants had emerged, and offers made, subject to receipt of satisfactory referees' reports. Every applicant has now been written to advise them of closure, and formal announcements about the successful candidates will follow in due course. Exec welcomed this update, and sincere thanks were expressed to JCA, FA, JWil, LR, JB and RG for their involvements on the interview panels.
- b. Office Accommodation – UoE has now painted the SUS offices, laid carpets, installed furniture and added signage. Two laptops and a desktop computer are also awaiting installation. This leaves only minor finishing touches to arrange, such as notice-boarding, filing cabinets, phones and printing/copying. This was welcomed.
- c. Review of Elite Sport – A small group of SUS reps (JCA, RG, Brian Ewing) met with sportscotland officials on 9 March to review the latest iteration of the summary/full report by Wharton Consulting. This was a constructive exchange, which proposed/agreed further changes (reduce in length and streamline recommendations). An updated version of the document has just been released by sportscotland for final sign-off. With this, and after some discussion, it was agreed that MF would offer (to JCA) any final comments on the summary document for forwarding to sportscotland. And, JCA would circulate the latest draft to Exec for information. After further consideration, Exec warmly welcomed the fact that the study strongly endorsed the positive role Universities play in supporting elite level student athletes, and agreed that every effort should now be made in publish/distribute the summary report without delay. SUS has also been invited to provide a foreword for the Summary report, and this was endorsed by Exec.
- d. Volunteering Development – SF spoke to paper SUS(EX)m5~1. Exec celebrated this initiative even though it seems SUS will not be receiving funding in the initial pilot phase. After discussion, it was agreed that SF should speak further with sportscotland about the content of the proposal, and the possibility of support from the second round of pilot

JCA

MF

JCA

monies in May. SF was congratulated on this proposal.

- e. Spring Update – Exec was invited to comment on the recent Spring e-update. This was received positively, though it was decided to make small changes to subsequent circulars. Each bulletin should start with a 'contents' listing to allow selective viewing, and the info itself should be presented in a more punchy and succinct style. It was also agreed that subsequent updates could in time be posted on the SUS web site/intra net thereby allowing the opportunity for formatting, pictures and so on.
- f. Commonwealth Games – As agreed, SUS has endorsed Glasgow's bid to host the 2014 Games. Exec was also delighted to see Scotland make such a promising start to the 2006 Games and to see so many students and graduates in the Team.

SF

SF

POLICY AND RESOURCES

Financials

- 4. JCA reported enthusiastically that sportscotland has confirmed its intention to award SUS £30k grant aid support per annum for the next three years. Exec warmly welcomed this.
- 5. JCA/SF reported on a meeting with representatives from Glasgow Caly, QMUC, Paisley and Napier Universities on Tuesday 14 March'06 (@QMUC ~ SUS represented by JCA/SF/RC and Pete Burgon ~ partner Unis involving Student Association officials and AU Presidents as appropriate). This was in response to concerns raised about the level of SUS subscriptions, the method of calculating partnership contributions, and crucially, the detrimental impact of the new fee structure on certain Universities. JCA stated that the discussions were very constructive, informative, wide-ranging and at times, direct. It was clear that some Universities had not considered or assimilated initial SUS consultations, with the result that a raft of important contextual issues had not been raised until recently. This was most unfortunate and was the root cause of current misunderstandings, misinformation and concerns. By the same token, it was conceded that SUS might have (should have) done more to press for responses when none were forthcoming. Not with standing the reasons, it was agreed that communication (now and in the future) was key, and efforts should be redoubled to ensure this is upheld (AU President's Buddy system; confirmed contacts lists; using permanent office bearers as secondary contacts) at all times.
- 6. Assuring value for money was a key theme of the QMUC meeting. SUS reps set out main programme areas/priorities, and the attendant benefits. Uni reps welcomed this and endorsed all that SUS was endeavouring to deliver. However, they were at pains to explain their financial arrangements locally, and the constraints they were working under (restricted budgets; competing priorities; low status of sport). These were real and legitimate issues. SUS reps were sympathetic and keen to assist (offering more information; assisting approaches to senior managers; etc). Moreover, and in order to create more time to resolve outstanding issues and ensure full involvement in SUS (at least initially), it was suggested that QMUC, Glasgow Caly and Paisley be afforded dispensation on their year one SUS affiliation (Napier has already budgeted for its year one fee). This was a compromise, but it did show good will on both 'sides' and create some crucial latitude in terms of allowing more time to resolve the problem areas. Exec discussed this matter, and unanimously endorsed the proposed course of action (agreeing Glasgow Caly; QMUC and Paisley should be charged year one affiliations equivalent to their SUSF fees). This would be contingent on further (and urgent) discussions taking place between SUS and related parties. With this, it was agreed that JCA/SF should convene a small group to progress the dialogue and to explore possible solutions to the funding paradox.
- 7. JCA stated that the SUS Treasurer's account had now been set up with RBS, and this would allow member invoices to be issued forthwith. JCA added that a high interest deposit account would be opened too to allow the SUSF/SUPEA reserves to be pooled and policed. This was welcomed.

JCA / SF

ENGINE ROOM UPDATES

- 8. Committee Chairs were invited to give the briefest of reports on their activities over the past two months.

Competitions Committee

9. In the absence of RG, SF/RC gave a brief overview on behalf of CC. Good progress is being made in framing the inter university programme for '06-07, the preparations for BUGs'06 (Swansea; 10-13 April'06) are well advanced and looking promising, and many Scottish Universities are still featuring in the latter stages of the BUSA KO's. In addition, CC has arranged the first ever SGB seminar (linking SDCs and SGB reps) on Sunday 7 May'06 with the working title 'no barriers-no limits' (venue TBC). Exec applauded this positive update and endorsed the AU Presidents wish to look afresh at the rules underpinning the SUS competitive programme. That said, JCA insisted that any proposals be passed to CC for further discussion and approval. This was agreed.

Professional Development Committee (PDC)

10. OD provided an upbeat account of PDC's work. Jude Ramsay has ranked the feedback from the consultation session at the Xmas Seminar and this will help inform the look and feel of the SUS 'interest' groups over upcoming months. This represents a significant step forward. Jan Griffiths is also in the process of updating the SUS contacts to provide a comprehensive directory of individuals/department/AU postal/email addresses, telephone numbers, and so forth. Arrangements for the inaugural SUS Conference (8-9 June'06 at UoE) are taking shape and the programme promises to be truly varied and inclusive, reaching across our entire sector. This will be discussed further at the next PDC meeting on Tuesday 28 March, along with project updates on the web site development, audit (the recent UCS survey was noted), administrators' workshop and further promotional literature on SUS. This was applauded.

OD

Physical Activity Committee (PAC)

11. JB noted enthusiastically that PAC now has a mission statement and a set of agreed aims, which she shared with Exec. These were approved in principle, and would prove invaluable in helping shape future actions. JB added that process had taken longer than anticipated, largely due to the fact PAC had undergone recent changes in membership and because teaching commitments made it difficult for elected officials to get together. Exec sympathised with this and offered support to PAC where-ever necessary. JB welcomed this and concluded her report by noting she would be participating in a two-day National Health and Physical Activity Master-class, which would offer valuable experience and networking opportunities. She is also keen to pursue *Active* – ILAM's Health and Physical Activity Recognition Award Programme and suggested SUS co-sponsor a pilot study to explore its value. This was agreed, and JB undertook to discuss the matter further with JCA/SF.

JB / JCA

/ SF

12. All Committee Chairs were thanked and congratulated on their updates.

OTHER BUSINESS

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| <p>13. <i>Heads Up</i> – JCA proposed that there should be the opportunity for SUS Exec members (or other reps) to report informally on their involvements with external committees (e.g. BUSA committees, UCS Management Group etc) or some other special event (attendance at a conference or professional meeting). This might provide a useful ‘inside’ perspective on current issues and allow the Exec to pre-empt discussions and/or actions, which may have implications for the HE sector in Scotland. Exec supported this suggestion.</p> | <p>JCA</p> |
| <p>14. <i>BUSA</i> – JCA reminded Exec that Ian Randell has just been appointed as BUSA’s new CEO. This was a significant appointment and it was agreed that Exec should write to Mr Randell to welcome him into post and to extend an invitation for him to visit SUS at the earliest opportunity.</p> | <p>SF</p> |
| <p>15. <i>Academic Links</i> – JCA reported that the Heads of Sports Related Academic Departments had recently come together for informal discussions on issues affecting their work. Amongst a range of other items, the forum had also identified the need and worth of connecting with SUS. JCA had been contacted by Ray Lloyd (University of Abertay, the nominated secretary of the new academic forum) and this resulted in some very positive and worthwhile exploratory exchanges. This had concluded with the agreement to keep communication channels open. SUS welcomed this development and undertook to see if there was any scope to involve the new academic forum in the SUS Conference.</p> | <p>JCA</p> |
| <p>16. <i>Next meeting</i> – to be held during the w/b 8 May’06, likely at St Andrews University.</p> | <p>All</p> |

The meeting closed at 1415 hrs with a vote of thanks to all concerned.