

EAUC Board Meeting 17/12/09 – Paper 17/12/04

Sheri Leigh Miles

EAUC Governance Consultation – Member Responses

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the member responses to our consultation document and to initiate discussion and decision on how the final document may be altered in light of some of the comments received.

Comments have not been edited but are presented in the following categories:

Generally supportive:

- I am in favour of the formation of three member expert panels and also non member input to the EAUC Board.
- I have reviewed the EAUC Governance paper and agree with its contents.
- I agree with all that has been identified by the EAUC board and confer with increasing the size of the board members and certainly to have non member experts on the board as this can only help to increase the effectiveness of the organisation.
- These recommendations seem logical and well founded. We would welcome and support developments in this direction.
- My only comments are that I would wholly support seeking external input at Board level as it will bring insightful benefits to the organisation.
- I think its emphasis on gaining support and advice from expert panels is very sensible with such a fast moving and extensive agenda, and the desire to introduce a more explicit emphasis on strategic change management is very exciting.
- Finally just to say the document was very clearly presented and does an excellent job in setting out the adjustments being made to the EAUC trajectory

Some Concern:

- If I have a concern about the proposed Board structure, it is that the Board could be quite large - 9 members, plus 8 regional convenors, plus up to 3 external trustees. You would need to establish suitable quorum levels to ensure that decisions would be made by a majority, possibly in each category e.g quorum is 5 board members plus 1 external plus 4 regional convenors.
- Whilst I agree there is a need to move forward, I am concerned that the appointment of 3 new Board Members outside the original core discipline of Environmental / Energy Mangers will result in too much diversification of interest resulting in losing sight of the initial primary focus of EAUC. In particular, I am concerned about the suggestion for senior management representation (who will have their own representation through AUDE etc.)

Further Questions /Suggestions:

- I was trying to locate the current constitution in the EAUC web site but can't so I'm not able to fully understand the roles and decision-making processes. There is the Memorandum and Articles of Association which seems to cover a range of topics that are broadly similar to what I would expect in a constitution. Within these, it relates to the Executive Committee. Is this different to the Board or the same body with a different name? If the latter, then the Memorandum and Articles may need to be revised.
- The change to add non-sector members to the board is a sound idea as they have the potential to add new and diverse perspectives, which is essential when working in the field of sustainability. I think the level of non-sector members is about right, I certainly do not think it needs to be higher, especially as there is an intention to add more senior managers from the areas of finance and procurement, many of whom will bring non-sector experience with them. As a membership body the majority view on the board must reflect the membership.

- The member expert panels seem a great idea and they fit into the structure very neatly. Will they be able to maintain their important role in an active manner through the voluntary contribution of members? How will a particular panel be brought to a close if it is no longer required or functioning? Clearly the choice of chair for a panel will be key in order to drive the panel and keep it responsive.
- With regard to the desire to expand expertise in the area of student engagement - how about encouraging a board member from People and Planet if you do not already have one. P&P also operate across FE and HE and it would be one way of allowing a student perspective to be heard at the board level.
- The HE research activities have perhaps been under represented in the past and I believe there is potential for more cross sector activity between HE and FE with regard to research. It is something HE can offer to FE and it has potential for being a vehicle for CPD in FE.

Two more substantial responses were also received and these are attached as entire documents as there is much of value in these considered responses. SLM

Graham Petersen, UCU National Environment Co-ordinator

The University and College Union (UCU) welcome the consultation paper produced by the EAUC. We believe that the EAUC plays a very important role in trying to ensure that the education sector fulfils its' environmental responsibilities.

The review comes at an important time for the sector. The introduction of the Carbon Reduction Commitment and the HE and FE strategies for carbon management will increasingly make sustainability one of the core activities of the sector.

UCU is keen to play its part in this and believes that the initiatives referred to below illustrate how we can help to achieve the objectives of the review exercise:

Member expert panels – We welcome this important new development. The 3 panels proposed – Campus, Curriculum and Community Matters – provide the broad focus needed to inform future developments. In relation to this we would point out that union members – both teaching and support staff – are increasingly active in all 3 areas. For example:

- Campus – We are developing a network of Environment Reps who are engaging with management across all aspects of environment management
- Curriculum - We are currently launching an 'Education against Climate Change' week in the lead-up to Copenhagen in December. This is part of a longer term project to support 'Greening the Curriculum' both in terms of 'hard skills for sustainability' as well as the equally important 'influencing skills' that are needed.
- Community – The 2 year UCU / COIN / Defra Climate Solidarity project will direct staff towards community organisations to support their carbon reduction efforts.

Non-member input – Expanding the range of organisations to be consulted is something we support. The student representatives are mentioned as examples of 'key stakeholders' but there is no reference to trade unions representing those working in the sector. We feel that is an omission. UCU and other unions such as UNISON and UNITE have a relationship with university and college staff which is different but no less important than the relationship between the NUS and students.' Political areas' are also mentioned and this is also somewhere that unions influence through a range of forums and committees such as the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC).

Graham Petersen, UCU National Environment Co-ordinator, 14/10/09

14 October 2009

Summary

The process has concluded that the EAUC Constitution is still broadly valid (with one exception), but that our governance will benefit from 2 actions.

- 1) That the Board (and members and staff) will benefit from better access to a wider range of insight, skills and knowledge to achieve the organisation's strategic vision and plan, and
- 2) That EAUC governance is presented in a clearer more transparent way so that Members are better aware of how they can contribute to and lead the organisation.

This paper outlines how we will address these two actions.

Action

The EAUC seeks Members' comments on this paper. Also the Board now seeks to appoint up to 3 new members who, following the Board's review of governance, will help to bring the necessary skills and experience to the organisation to complement and further strengthen the current Board.

Please send your comments on the paper to info@eauc.org.uk to be received by **Thursday 15th**

October 2009. The deadline for applications to become a Board Member is **18th November**.

Review Findings

A. The key attributes of Board makeup have been agreed as:

1. Reflecting EAUC Membership

As a membership organisation it is imperative that the EAUC's governance has its foundation in its membership i.e. the universities, colleges and wider learning and skills sector organisations in the UK. I agree and this is, perhaps, the most important aspect of all. If we lose sight of this, or if the member representatives think we have then we have lost everything. It is also worth noting that the members are not the individuals but the institutions in which they are employed. The role of the individual is to represent the best interests of their organization and the sector and to act as a two way conduit between EAUC and their institution.

To that end the Board must ensure it reflects the diversity of the sector and the broadest range of activity and interests within it. The EAUC remains committed to supporting environmental estates based colleagues as well as being increasingly committed to supporting teachers, business support staff, researchers and student and wider community facing staff engaged in the wider sustainability agenda. In addition the EAUC recognises the need to support all levels of sector based staff be they operational, academic or senior management. We also need to ensure that we maintain representation from all of the UK and to ensure that, as constituted, our Board continues to represent both Higher and Further Education members that is, the organisations/institutions.

2. Benefiting from Non Member Insight

The EAUC Board must ensure it has access to people with the skills, experience and background it needs to govern effectively. Currently our Constitution only allows the Board to comprise only those employed within a college or university. The Board now recognises that, alongside its FHE sector

experts, it will benefit from a measure of expertise and insight from beyond this core group. Education is one part of the complex system of sustainable development and having insight from other parts of the system such as corporate and international affairs, the political arena, sector representative groups (including students), NGO's and other stakeholders will contribute to the success of the EAUC. This will require a change in our Constitution. **This is undoubtedly correct. There is, however, the issue of allowing non-member representatives to have a controlling role, rather than simply providing insight. I would, therefore, recommend that non-member Board members are *ex-officio* and are not, effectively, Trustees. They should not be permitted to vote on any issue, simply to provide input and advice for consideration by the Trustees.**

I also have long believed that EAUC should have more direct input from the student body. In line with this I recommend that one of these new non-member roles is allocated specifically to a student.

3. Being advised and supported by Sector Experts

There is a wealth of skill and experience available from within the EAUC membership. The organization will benefit from creating new practitioner networks and by evolving and expanding existing structures such as the current Transport or ESD/SHED groupings. By providing new mechanisms to facilitate this exchange, the EAUC will ensure that this valuable resource is made better available to support the Board, other Members and staff.

4. Governed by Trustees and run by the EAUC Staff.

The EAUC Board's primary role is to govern the organisation and to set its strategic direction. Therefore it must have the people with the skills and background to do this. The Board recognises that it will benefit from a more structured and strategic mechanism to identify and recruit a broader range of Board Members. The Board recognises that day to day running of the organisation and delivery of the strategic plan is the responsibility of the Executive Director and the other EAUC staff.

B) Board Governance of the EAUC

Over the period of its review the EAUC Board has confirmed that its key functions are:

- to set **Strategic** Direction
- to assess Organisational **Performance**
- to provide a **Scrutinising** Function

While running the business of the organisation is delegated to the Executive Director, the Board is ultimately legally accountable. The Board meets four or five times a year. The current size of the Board is 9 (excluding Regional Branch Convenors) and the Board considers this to remain acceptable. The Board currently consists of:

- Individuals who are directly elected from the EAUC membership at the AGM
- Elected Convenors of official EAUC Regional Branches. This group is in addition to the AGM elected Board Members

The Board has a Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer, chosen by the Board. The Board is free to establish sub committees as necessary to help it function efficiently and effectively. Examples of these could be a Finance Committee and a Search Committee to lead on the recruitment of new Board members.

C. A More Transparent, Member-Led Governance Structure

The EAUC is a Member-led organisation and as such the Board review has recommended that EAUC governance is presented in a clearer more transparent way so that Members are better aware of how

they can contribute to and lead the organisation. I think this is essential both now and on an ongoing basis. As the organization grows then it becomes less intuitive how it is constituted, how the lines of communication work and how member representatives can influence strategic direction on an ongoing basis and the other more mundane functions that are essential to the good support of practitioners.

Figure 1 (over) attempts to present the reviewed, updated and more transparent EAUC governance structure. The graphic shows the key constituents of the EAUC as proposed by the Board. Most exist currently but one is new and the other an evolution of an existing structure. EAUC Members are represented by the orange triangle with EAUC staff on the left in yellow and the new Non Member expert input on the right (blue). The arrows in the graphic show the direction of input and influence.

A Proposed Change to the Constitution

The above Board structure is as set out in the current Constitution and no changes are proposed in this regard. Where a change in the Constitution is proposed is with regard to the organisation's ability to access and benefit from a measure of external non member insight and experience. The Board now recognises that there is value in this and proposes to bring to the next AGM a motion to amend the Constitution to allow the Board to recruit no more than three out of sector Board Members. It should be noted that this would leave at least 8 sector based Board Members (including the current Branch Convenors of Wales and Scotland). See A 2 above. I think it is important to ensure that EAUC has as wide a range of expert input as required. Whilst limiting to three might seem sensible, if the out of sector board members were *ex officio* and had no voting powers it would not be critical to restrict the numbers so severely.

National Board of Trustees – Any member can apply to join the Board (becoming a Trustee) and be elected by members at the AGM. The Board's primary role is to govern the organisation and to set its strategic direction. **EXISTING**

Member Expert Panels – The Board wishes to establish in the first instance three important Expert Panels. At this stage the Panels are likely to focus on Campus, Curriculum and Community/Student matters. They will identify key trends and offer high quality professional insight. Comprising members who are experienced experts in their area the Expert Panels will become a key source of advice and support to other Members, the Board and the staff. The three Panels will be Chaired by an appropriate Board Member and Members with particular expertise and experience can apply or be nominated to join them. **NEW** Whilst I agree that this and the COPs (presume similar to Scotland's TSNs) are a good idea it is essential that we recognise that SD is a cross cutting issue and also that in smaller organisations there is, perhaps, only a single practitioner. For this reason EAUC must take great care not to create the so called 'silos' that we don't already have. I expressed an opinion at a recent TSN meeting that the arrival of charging for events has, in my case, sometimes tipped the balance so that I do not attend events that would be outwith my direct area of professional remit. In the past I would have attended the occasional one or two so as to understand the basics of wider issues and to network a bit with people who focus on these. It is my fear that by focusing like this we will lose the benefits of the 'scatter gun effect'. It should provide more efficiency but great care is required.

Regional Branches – Our Constitution facilitates the development of recognised regional EAUC branches to add an additional layer of local support and networking to Members. Members can join or (subject to Board approval) establish formal EAUC Branches eg English Midlands, Northern Ireland etc. Each Branch elects a Branch Convenor who is then expected to become a Board Member and representing Branch members and interests at national Board meetings. **EXISTING** I also think it may be fruitful to find a way to facilitate low/mid level communication and collaboration between branches. There may be much to be gained by identifying common issues etc and these can then be fed upwards to EAUC staff for development/progress/consideration by the Board if required.

Member Communities of Practice – Linked in to the relevant Expert Panels our intention is to help members with particular professional interests or needs to network and share with each other. We want Member discussion to become more focused and efficient with a new framework offering a structured

exchange of information and ideas. Members will be able to join any number of COPs. In turn, these COP's will be linked to an appropriate Member Expert Panel. At this stage we envisage for example the existing Transport Network and a future Procurement COP being linked to the Campus Expert Panel etc. We are currently investigating suitable IT solutions to facilitate the interaction and collaboration of these groups. **EXISTING BUT DEVELOPED FURTHER** See also Member Expert Panel above. This, for me, is one of the things that sits at the heart of the past success of EAUC. To allow it to flourish, however, it needs to be carefully supported by EAUC staff and to be allowed to develop in whatever way suits a particular COP (within reason of course!). It's important that these grass roots groups do not become constrained by having to comply with specific 'rules' set just for the sake of conformity and control.

EAUC Staff - Day to day running of the organisation and delivery of the EAUC's Strategic Plan is the responsibility of the Executive Director and the other EAUC staff. Appropriate linkage between the EAUC staff and all elements of the wider organisation is essential and this structure envisages an important facilitation and support role for staff at all levels of the EAUC. **EXISTING** It is important at this time of expansion that the Board, the Exec Director and all of the staff remain focused on the roots and stems of what member representatives want. Staff support for these may not be as interesting and stimulating as the work on 'political' and strategic issues. Whilst these latter are important for the relevance of EAUC to 'outsiders' (eg funding bodies etc) the organisation itself will wither if these core functions are not carefully nurtured and supported by the organisation. It is, therefore, essential that staff resources are made available for this and that the requirement for this support is regularly reviewed and responded to.

Non Member Input – The organisation will benefit from a measure of out of sector and non-member expertise and insight. Education is one part of the complex system of sustainable development and having insight from other parts of the system such as corporate and international affairs, the political arena, NGO's, students and other key stakeholders etc will contribute to the success of the EAUC. **NEW** EAUC needs to take care not to fall into the trap of other organization of being drawn into international affairs. Whilst they will invariably impact on what happens in member institutions, and we must be aware of what is upcoming, we must not be tempted to deploy limited resources on anything other than remaining aware and responding to relevant consultations. EAUC **does** have a role in lobbying in the political arena but I want to repeat that this should not be at the expense of core activities.

It is critical as EAUC goes forward with this that practitioners can clearly see who is associated with each of the groupings above, what the remit of each person is and how that practitioner can become part of the process (eg how do they become part of a COP, how do they get elected to the Board, which staff member should they contact about a particular issue – should they **not** contact a staff member but contact someone from the COP etc). At present I think most of this is not clear to practitioners.

D. Identifying the Board Members We Need

As part of its deliberations, the Board considered the likely background, expertise and necessary skills of incoming Board members.

The Board noted that its future membership would continue to rely on FHE sector experts to provide the necessary insight to an organisation which, at its heart, is there to serve its core constituency of sustainability practitioners. It did, however, also note that to ensure that the EAUC continues to reflect the emergence of sustainability as a mainstream aspect of sector business and can influence sector policy across the entire sustainability agenda, a broader range of skills, expertise and backgrounds is now required to give the Board and the EAUC the best possible opportunity to fulfill that emerging role.

Background:

While the majority of Board members will continue to emerge from among those sector experts based in Universities and Colleges, the Board wants to open itself up to applications and nominations from nonmembers including those from other educational providers, such as adult learning, continuing education or work based learning, or from other non-sector areas that will allow it to attract expertise from groups not constituted as full EAUC members (e.g. NGOs, student representative groups, industry experts and so on).

Areas of Expertise:

In addition to looking to broaden the possible background of its Trustees, the EAUC is keen to invite the participation of those who can provide expertise in key emerging areas of the sustainability agenda in Colleges and Universities. Thus, alongside the need for colleagues who can continue to provide

Campus expertise in areas such as Buildings, Estates and Facilities Management, the Board is keen to invite the participation of others, including those with **Community and Student** expertise, specifically those involved in working with and supporting students and in community and other local stakeholder engagement. A key development area for the EAUC is to investigate how to ensure core FE and HE outputs contribute to sustainability and to that end those with **Teaching, Learning and Research**

expertise are sought, specifically curriculum design, teaching delivery and the dissemination of research.

Finally, the Board feels it will benefit from the participation of both experienced **Sector Senior Managers** (e.g. Finance, Procurement and HR) with specific interest and involvement in sustainability as well as **Non Member Experts** who can bring any of the desired skills to the table.

Skills:

The specific skills sought from within the above areas of expertise include:

- Strategic Leadership:** Experience of high-level institutional or organisational leadership.
- Organisational Development:** Experience in building and developing organisations and change management processes.
- Financial Management:** Experience in financial management, accounting and reporting.

Subject to previous comments I would agree. The organisation needs professional quality leadership but you must guard against neglecting the practical issues and for that reason must find a way of ensuring that you do not develop a Board that creates a 'them and us' scenario that makes practitioners feel remote from the Board.

Member Expert Panels and Communities of Practice

It is our intention to establish a number of Member Expert Panels and Member Communities of Practice as the next stage in this process. Members will be approached for their ideas and suggestions on this within the next 6 months.

- Curriculum Policy and Direction.** Someone with national and international insight and involvement in curriculum (and research) development.
- Business & Enterprise:** Commercial and entrepreneurial skills to allow the organisation to grow to do more and maintain its financial sustainability.

□ **Political Insight and Influence.** Those with an insight into FE and HE policy and emerging sector trends or wider understanding of Government sustainability thinking and planning.

Through all of this the Board hopes that its composition will gradually evolve, embracing a range of complimentary skills that will enable it to set the strategic direction for the EAUC and consolidate the EAUC's reputation as the F&HE sector's expert body on the full range of sustainability issues.

Again, whilst not disagreeing in general, I get the feeling that the focus is a great deal on EAUC as a commercial and political entity and not on member's needs and wishes. I appreciate that EAUC must be maintained as a business/charitable entity but worry that we are in danger of the tail wagging the dog rather than the dog wagging the tail. This is a situation that I have seen in all of the major organisations with which I have had any association (eg IoB, IEMA, RICS, trade unions) and it results in members becoming disengaged and the direction, strategy and governance of the organisation end up being directed by the enthusiastic few, who usually have their own agenda that is not entirely altruistic. The development of that situation causes members to become even less engaged as they then think 'what's the point; it's too much effort to affect the outcome'. It would be extremely sad if EAUC was to fall into this pit.

ACTION

Recruitment of 3 new Board Members

At the next AGM (22nd March 2010, University of Bangor), a number of Trustees come to the end of their term. In addition we have a number of immediate vacancies. The skills of the current Board have been mapped against a skills matrix and as a result, the EAUC Board is keen to recruit new Trustees who will bring additional expertise and skills to the organisation that will complement and further strengthen the current membership of the Board.

I am concerned about the potential for members to perceive 'crony-ism', even when it doesn't exist. It is not clear how non-sector Board members will be selected. If there were more expressions of interest/nominations than the number of posts how would a final decision be made. I think member representatives are generally comfortable with the election of Board members from within the ranks of HFE. I don't suppose there has ever been the need for members to compete for a seat on the Board but it is just possible that practitioners will nominate too many non-member people and so the process of selection and election needs to be transparent.

In the first instance we are looking to recruit up to 3 new Board Members by December 2009, with further recruits being sought at the March 2010 AGM. New recruits should have a particular background in one of the following:

- **Teaching, Learning and Research**
- **Communities and Students**
- **Sector Senior Management**
- **Relevant Non Member Expertise**

In addition to this background, new Board Members should bring specific skills in one or more of the following areas:

- **Financial Management**
- **Curriculum Design and Policy**
- **Business and Enterprise**

- **Political Insight**

- **Organisational Development**

- **Strategic Leadership**

Further guidance on the possible Background, Expertise and Skills of new Board members is included below. [See comments about skills and knowledge above in Section D.](#)

I would like to make one final comment please. I no longer think that the name of the organization is relevant to its objectives. I appreciate that the name EAUC has been our badge, brand if you will, for a long time and it has taken time for this to become recognized. However, I believe that the time for change is upon us and the name should be changed to reflect the wider role in sustainability, rather than just the environment. It is my view that environmental sustainability is only one part of the picture, all be it an important part. EAUC is branching into areas outwith those that focus on environment. Whilst climate change etc is critical its political spotlight will dim as people become jaded and controls are put in place. If we are to effect real change this must come from a focus on people and society and this is why I believe the title should change. A name change would cause significant disruption and confusion initially but I believe it is important in allowing EAUC to spread its wings and to properly illustrate what it is trying to achieve.

Ann Galbraith

University of Glasgow