



Minutes of the second Annual General Meeting of the Association for Learning Development in Higher Education (ALDinHE)

Held at Horton Barn (Room 01.27), University of Bradford, Monday 17 March 2008

Chair: John Hilsdon

Minutes: Johanna Keenan

Documents provided to those in attendance:

- Revised constitution of the Association
- Chair's report
- Membership report
- Financial statement

Item 1 – Verification of, and Matters Arising from, the minutes of the Inaugural Meeting:

- (i) The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.
- (ii) Matters arising from the minutes:

Pauline Ridley raised a question about subscription rates; this was deferred to the Secretary's report – see below.

Item 2 – Chair's Report:

John Hilsdon made reference to a recent speech by Secretary of State for Education, John Denham, highlighting the government's view of the importance of the student experience in Further/Higher Education and how this relates to the work of ALDinHE members and the association.

He described some of the achievements of the organisation to date, from its inception as an email discussion list to the formation of a membership association.

A correction was made to the Chair's written report: paragraph 1 should read '41 Individual members and approximately 30 Institutional members'. There were therefore approximately 70 named members (NB the lack of a precise number is due

to a late flurry of membership applications prior to the symposium and being processed at the time).

John highlighted two key areas in which ALDinHE is hoping to make progress:

1. Professional Development – he expanded on paragraph 3 of his report, explaining how the organisation hopes to provide opportunities for professional development, and referred to Liz Shrives, SEDA co-chair, who was present at the meeting. It was confirmed that talks have taken place between Steering Group members and SEDA about the Professional Framework, and how a learning development strand might be established. As an organisation ALDinHE could potentially act in lieu of a validating body to oversee development of portfolio work towards a professional development certificate in Learning Development. Discussions are at an early stage still, but with the agreement of the membership the organisation's Steering Group will seek to pursue this aim.
2. In addition, the Chair expressed the view that there may be potential for an international conference around Learning Development in the future, involving the Association for Language and Learning Advisors in Australia, the Association of Tertiary Advisors of New Zealand, and the US group on academic advising NACADA.
3. In terms of an advisory role, ALDinHE will pursue talks with the HE Academy about Learning Development issues. The notion of the student experience is very current and therefore this seems the best vehicle to use to pursue ALDinHE's aims and to define more carefully what we mean by Learning Development.
4. Publications – there are number of possible options being considered by the Steering Group:

With SEDA: we might contribute to an edition of *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*. Could invite presenters to submit their draft papers and post-delivery there should be some material worthy of publication. Thus, in a relatively short period of time there is potential to put together a publication based on Learning Development by members and based in the event.

And/or

Could possibly contribute an insert to the SEDA newsletter (*Educational Developments*).

And/or

Material could be collected for an online ALDinHE publication. The Steering Group have contacted colleagues involved in the production of on-line journals. This option could mean publication in the next few months.

Discussion on Publications:

- It was suggested from the floor that a peer-reviewed online journal would be ideal - an academically rigorous publication.
- A reservation was raised about the language used to describe sessions at this conference – practitioners could be put off if overly academic. Urged that care be taken not to diminish the authentic voice of practitioners.
- Carol Elston suggested there is agreement about making LD publications as accessible as possible rather than excluding people by use of language.
- Becka Carrant endorsed this – there should be a focus on examples of good practice, and raising issues of practice to explore in depth – e.g. issues raised in LDHEN mailings, and research papers – we can do it all and be inclusive!
- Jonathon Staal reflected on the conference as representing a community of practice, expressed the view that we want to be a professional group who support each other through continuing conversations.
- Peter Hartley raised the potential of ‘mixed text’ journals – these contain a combination of reflections, case studies plus more conventional academic articles. He added that the HEA is inviting comment on their Strategic Plan and ALDinHE should input. It was noted that some members and their departments are responding.
- Becka Carrant felt a journal would help as a vehicle for our voice as representing a significant body within the academic community, i.e. as an interest group.
- The Chair expressed the view that further discussion should be undertaken by the SG about publications: academic type (peer-reviewed) and practitioner type (less academically rigorous). He felt it may be that, like SEDA we would want to produce various kinds of publication in time. It was noted that there is general support for producing an ALDinHE journal and we will aim to do so.

Item 3 – Membership Report:

Caroline Cash, Membership Secretary referred members to her report, distributed at the meeting. She explained that there has been a flurry of membership applications in the days prior to the Symposium, so numbers will be confirmed in the next few days.

Next year membership will be included as part of the Symposium fee, with institutions being invoiced in January yearly thereafter. This should streamline the membership process.

Constitutional change: at present institutional membership is £100, with two representatives to benefit from membership but only one voting right at AGM or extraordinary meetings.

It was felt that institutional membership should confer voting rights for 2 members. This may need to be changed at the next review of the Constitution, and Caroline invited members to email comments on this.

Individual membership is currently £30, but this is likely to increase next year.

The Membership Secretary's report was accepted.

Item 4 – Finance Report:

Treasurer, Judy Cohen reported on finances and referred members to her report. The bank balance is currently approx £8,000, this total being roughly equally distributed between memberships and Symposium registration fees. Approx £2,600 from the Bournemouth symposium minus costs is included in the balance.

The income from this year's symposium has not yet been banked and costs have been kept low by no charge for rooms. There has also been a flurry of new members, still being processed. The total once income from the symposium and new memberships minus costs will be approx £12,000.

Ben Yudkin suggested that ALDinHE seeks to get a deal with a venue for next year where we can secure nominal fees for rooms used at the symposium.

Judy explained that if we use lecture rooms, etc they are usually free, but it is the post-conference facilities which increase costs significantly.

John Hilsdon said the membership need to decide how to spend money accruing after expenses are met. Perhaps explore the possibility of putting in place a scholarship, or small research grants.

Judy noted that we need to be conservative when estimating the amount expected to come in the next year as membership will be included for the first time.

The financial report was accepted

Item 5 - Constitution:

It was reported that there is now an amended constitution (version 2.1) since the original constitution gave power to the Steering Group to make amendments within the first 12 months of the existence of the association.

The changes that have been made were outlined as follows:

- Item 6(a) – changes to membership dates and periods. Caroline Cash explained the individual membership period: anyone who has paid subscriptions as of September 2007 will expire at the symposium 2009 (18 months). Institutions who hold membership will be re-invoiced in January 2009. John explained that thereafter the membership period and symposium will coincide.
- Increase in numbers of officers on Steering Group – to be increased by three to a total of 10, to accommodate the number of people interested in being involved. It was suggested that there ought to be a maximum length of service. The penultimate paragraph of the amended constitution now recommends that no Steering Group officer hold any one post for more than four consecutive years.

Another change suggested was to reduce the amount of notice needed to propose changes to the constitution. This was **not** enacted as it had been felt by the SG to be too major for them to approve without reference to Article 8. A decision had been made to stick to giving 21 days notice as per the original constitution.

Jan Sellers noted that having a significant period of notice had proved useful in an organisation she knows.

John Hilsdon proposed that at the next AGM there should be a proposal to reduce the number of days needed for constitutional changes, maybe not to as few as 7, but something between 7 and 21 days.

The amended constitution was approved.

Item 7 - Election of officers:

Nomination forms were posted in the foyer. No-one contested any of the positions and the number up for nomination is the agreed number of officers.

It was opened to the floor for self-nominations.

Officers elected as follows:

- Chair: John Hilsdon
- Vice-Chair: Pauline Ridley
- Secretary: Caroline Cash
- Treasurer: Andy Hagyard
- Additional officers: Becka Carrant, Julia Braham, Judy Turner, Jan Sellers, Chris Keenan, Jonathon Staal.

Accepted.

Item 8 on the agenda was covered earlier in the meeting. Penny Burden suggested that from next year ALDinHE should be actively recruit new Steering Group officers.

Becka Carrant noted that most will step down in 2 years therefore this will enable shadowing to aid transition.

Ben requested there be a prompt issued a couple of months prior to the next selection process.

Action: Institute a process for 'shadowing' officers during 2008-9.

Item 9: AOB

None.