

UNIVERSITY OF WALES, BANGOR
SCHOOL OF WELSH-MEDIUM STUDIES

Meeting: 21 October 2004

Location: Senior Staff Common Room

Present: Dr Einir Young (Chair), Llion Dafydd, Jason Walford Davies, Branwen Jarvis, Eifion Lloyd Jones, Bethan Wyn Jones, Llion Jones, Wendy Lloyd Jones, Peredur Lynch, Delyth Morris, Delyth Murphy, Iestyn Pierce, Delyth Prys, Nic Ros, Enlli Thomas, Cen Williams, Dilwyn Roberts-Young (UCAC), Dawi Griffiths (Minutes).

Apologies: Margaret Deuchar, Dafydd Roberts, Wyn Thomas, Geraint Hughes, Carys Roberts, Deri Tomos, Gwenno Ffrancon, Elen Huws, Menna Morgan, Gwenan Williams, Eifiona Thomas Lane, Arne Pommerening, Densil Morgan, Gareth Roberts, Gwerfyl Roberts.

1. CONGRATULATIONS

Dr Jason Walford Davies of the Department of Welsh was congratulated on winning the Crown at this year's National Eisteddfod.

2. RETIREMENT

It was noted that this would be the last School meeting for Professor Branwen Jarvis since she would be retiring in December. She was thanked for her contribution to the School's activities over the years, and best wishes were conveyed for the future.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the School held on 21 April 2004 were accepted as a correct record with one correction. **3(ii) (c)** should read 'not to pursue 3 subjects' rather than 'to pursue 3 subjects'.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Director drew attention to some matters arising from the minutes:

- a) Thanks were conveyed to all who had attended the meeting at Oswalds on May 10. Noted that the document had been distributed and that it appeared as though some of the messages had struck home, e.g., the need for a financial incentive.
- b) Concern was expressed that no information was forthcoming as yet concerning the University stand at the Urdd and National Eisteddfodau next year, nor as to how School members will contribute to these – particularly the 2005 Eryri Eisteddfod. The channels of communication were unclear, and the Director was asked to request the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar for a meeting with her and the Deputy Director in order to ensure input in good time. Also noted that Carys Roberts would raise the matter of University representation at the Royal Welsh Show at the Marketing Committee on 30 September, but that no response had been received from her as yet.
- c) Noted that Enlli and Ginny proposed to speak on their Welsh vocabulary test at the dyslexia conference to be held at Aberystwyth on 11 December. It is hoped that further developments will come from this.

5. PRESENTATION BY DILWYN ROBERTS-YOUNG

Dilwyn Roberts-Young, UCAC Colleges representative, was welcomed to the meeting to give a presentation on UCAC's vision for Welsh-medium teaching in the Higher Education sector. He divided his presentation into a number of sub-headings:

Funding: In responding to the Funding Council's draft strategy, it was noted that lack of funding was an increasing threat to the Welsh medium and that the area depended to a large degree on goodwill and scarce resources. He stated that UCAC was committed to the principle of a Welsh Federal College.

Staffing: Noted that a number of Welsh-medium lecturers were nearing retirement age and that it was proving difficult to fill the gaps. Although UCAC welcomed the Scholarships and Fellowships it was emphasised that the true need was for long-term planning and more training for staff with, perhaps, a financial incentive.

Academic: Stress was laid on the need to create a climate which will encourage staff to carry out Welsh-medium academic work.

Marketing: Noted that there was a genuine need for a national strategy to attract students to study through the medium of Welsh, in addition to a definite framework of courses. It was stated that no increase was possible without such developments.

In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that a seminar would be beneficial, with representation from UCAC, the School and local schools to discuss the situation. The need to spread the message in schools was emphasised, with children needing to be fluent and confident in their subject to ensure success, and schools having to be aware of the exact nature of the problem, since this arises before pupils reach the HE sector. A meeting will be arranged during the next few months to open out the discussion, and Dilwyn Roberts-Young will consult with the Director to organise this.

6. DIRECTOR'S MATTERS

i) Numbers of Welsh speakers at UWB 2003/04

Noted that numbers were higher than in 2002-03 since we have for the first time been able to include students from the Department of Lifelong Learning, who are located in the community (approx.300 Welsh speakers). **1061** were first-language speakers and **802** were learners. However, only **614** wished to receive correspondence in Welsh, and it was felt that an attempt should be made to improve this.

Early forecasts from this year's data (2004-05) suggest that numbers are again slightly higher (by about 60), although the largest increase is in the 'learners' (about 50). Again, early forecasts from the module registration data for 2004/05 suggests that about 340 FTE undergraduates are registered on Welsh-medium modules, as compared with 354 in 2003/04. It was noted, however, that these figures may very probably change.

Departments were reminded of the importance of ensuring that the statistics sent to HESA are accurate since these data form the basis of HEFCW's Welsh-medium funding allocation.

ii) Funding Council Fellowships

The Director outlined the latest situation regarding the above Fellowships. Of the five appointed under the scheme throughout Wales in this academic year, two were attracted to Bangor, Guto Puw to the School of Music and Dafydd Tudur to the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. Guto will be developing two exciting new modules in Composition and Music on the Web, while Dafydd will be developing two new modules on Puritansim in Wales and on Christianity and Welsh Nationhood. There was also a brief discussion of the remit of the other Fellows.

Noted that Seren Haf Roberts, the Fellow appointed last year, remained at the School of Psychology, and that Dewi Llŷr Jones was a Fellow at the School of Law.

The Director also drew attention to the idea of having a network of Welsh PhD students from all areas across Wales. To this end, she had been collecting the names of PhD students at Bangor who can speak Welsh, and was surprised that there were so many - 24 – which is by no means a final figure. It is hoped to organise a day at Aberystwyth in December or January for the Fellows, these students (and their peers from other colleges in Wales) and their mentors to meet and discuss various issues. The Funding Council had agreed to fund the scheme.

iii) Response to the Funding Council's draft strategy

Members were reminded that an extraordinary meeting to discuss this was held on 16 July. The School's comments had been sent to the Funding Council and an official response sent on behalf of the institution. In this strongly-worded and plain-speaking response, the Vice-Chancellor suggested in no uncertain terms that the college believes that a financial incentive should be offered to Welsh-medium students, basing his argument on the precedent set by the teachers' incentive scheme.

The meeting was encouraged by the strength and resolution of the message sent, and the Director was requested to inform the Vice-Chancellor of the feeling of the meeting. For information, she was also requested to ask him what the basis was for the assumption that those studying through the medium of Welsh wished to vary their language of tuition.

iv) Bid by the University Board for Welsh-Medium Teaching to the reconfiguration fund

Noted that there were two elements to the bid, and that HEFCW had so far paid attention to one only, the Scholarships and Fellowships scheme. 50 members of staff will be trained under the scheme between 2005-2010.

The Funding Council will shortly address the second aspect, that of the options assessment exercise.

v) Review of the Language Scheme and Academic Strategy Development

The Director stated that she and Professor Gareth Roberts were gathering information from departments and schools on the basis of that which was included in the 2000 Language Scheme, the results of the 2002 monitoring process, and that which was reported in the PDIG consultation. Targets will need to be revisited in the light of the UWB 2003/04 – 2007/08 Strategic Plan and the commitment to the region seen therein.

vi) Decision-Making Structure: The Way Ahead

Noted that PACI, PYCI and the Bilingualism Committee will continue, and that PAG has been renamed the Welsh-Medium Studies Task Group, retaining more or less the same membership. However, the School of Welsh-Medium Studies does not appear in the new framework. It was felt that the Welsh medium had no specific voice, particularly at the Board of Academic Heads, and that the Director should be a member of that Board in order to have a say at this level and to bring relevant issues to the attention of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for the Welsh medium (Professor Gareth Roberts). Resolved that it would be beneficial for representatives of the School to talk to Gareth to work out the best way of approaching the Executive.

7. REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CANOLFAN BEDWYR

A report was distributed by the Director, Dr Cen Williams, who drew attention to some of the main issues:

General: Noted that the Centre had now settled at Bryn Haul and that all were welcome to visit.

2003-04 was a very successful year for the Centre as regards attracting income. A total of £572,000 research funding was captured, with the e-Welsh unit attracting most of this funding.

Also noted that the internal Quality Audit team would visit Canolfan Bedwyr in March 2005.

Translation Unit: Reported that the unit had begun using the Wordfast translation memory system. Also, Meg Elis had co-operated a great deal with Professor Thomas Watkins of the School of Law, and that a further meeting had been arranged to discuss legal terminology.

e-Welsh: Noted that the Cysgliad package had been completed and launched at the Eisteddfod. Sales are good, and many institutions have bought user licences. It was also reported that staff of the Place Names unit have transferred full-time to Canolfan Bedwyr and that 3 other new posts have been created in e-Welsh.

Cymraeg Clir: Noted that Syllabus 4 of the ECDL qualification had been translated and that more work was anticipated. The unit is also still receiving work from a number of other bodies.

Reported that the Cymraeg Clir Partnership Agreement is also gaining ground, and that a number of organisations, such as the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, Conwy Council and Carmarthenshire County Council, are anxious for their translators to have the training which would earn them the right to use the CC mark.

Gloywi Iaith: Noted that a total of 25 students had registered on the modules and that teaching had commenced. However, numbers on some courses were disappointing - only 2 had registered on the Department of Lifelong Learning's Gloywi course and 6 on the Communication module.

Language Scheme: Noted that final draft of a guidance booklet on staff appointments in accordance with the Language Scheme requirements had gone to translation to be submitted to the Human Resources Committee and the Bilingualism Committee in November. It was also stated that a booklet and video on language levels had been completed, to assist those responsible for appointing to various departments of the University.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 2 February 2005 at 5.15 in the Council Chamber.