

Minutes of the INQAAHE General Assembly meeting held at  
2005 Conference, Wellington, New Zealand

Wednesday 30 March, 2005

Richard Lewis, President of INQAAHE welcomed all the delegates to Wellington and officially opening the General Assembly meeting.

1. **Minutes of the GA meeting held in Dublin 2003.**  
Agreed
2. **Matters arising**  
There were no matters arising
3. **Draft revised Constitution**  
Richard Lewis outlined the principle changes included in the draft constitution as circulated to the members, as follows:

**Purpose of INQAAHE**

An extension of the purposes of the network, to meet current expectations including provision for commissioning research and accepting invitations to take part in review of agencies.

**Membership**

To include a new grade of affiliate membership, which has existed informally for some years but was not included in the constitution. The new draft provides greater clarification of benefits of membership. In addition the document extends the possibility of membership to meta accreditation agencies, those agencies responsible for the recognition of external quality assurance agencies.

**Board**

To allow for wider range of representation and additional experience and expertise it is proposed that the size of the board be increased.

**Registration**

This specifies in more explicit terms the legal registration, which has existed since 1999.

**Networks**

This section recognises the growth of regional networks

**Affiliation**

This section gives effect to previous General Assembly decisions to affiliate with UNESCO or other relevant international bodies.

The General Assembly agreed that the draft constitution be amended to include the following amendments:

Section 3 (3.8) – amend to include existing agencies

Sections 31 – delete

Section 33 – amend to read “The Board shall appoint a Secretariat, which must be a full or associate member and whose Chief Executive or nominee shall be the Secretary of the Network and a member of the Board ex officio”.

Section 34 – amend to include “but without a vote” in final sentence

Richard Lewis proposed a resolution to accept the amended constitution. Steven Crow moved that the resolution be so moved.

The constitution was accepted with all members present for, none against.

#### 4. **INQAAHE Working Groups**

##### **Guidelines of Good Practice**

Dorte Kristoffersen updated the GA on developments to the Guidelines by the Working Group since the meeting in Oman. Dorte Kristoffersen noted the proposal of the Board to include an eleventh item to include collaboration with other bodies, including international agencies. Following discussion by the GA it was agreed that this point should not, at this stage be included, but that consideration should be given to including such a provision in the on-going review of the guidelines. It was agreed that the Guidelines be accepted in the form presented and printed for circulation to include a note emphasising that the examples of sources of evidence were examples and intended as guidelines only.

It was further agreed that the Guidelines be tested in the forthcoming year and that agencies using them be requested to report back to INQAAHE with a view to discussing at the 2006 Members Workshop and 2007 biennial Conference.

The GA noted the significant achievement of the Working Group and thanked Dorte Kristoffersen.

##### **Relations with Regional Networks**

Dorte Kristoffersen outlined the discussion held in Oman on the Relations with Regional Networks and the emergence of new Networks and sub Networks since and the fact that the INQAAHE board has had continuous discussions since.

With a view to formalising and making contact between the regional networks and INQAAHE more efficient, the Board proposals going forward are:

- To map the networks of the World;
- To work closely with the Regions;
- To take a more pro-active role in working with Regions, by establishing contacts to liaise with Board members with a view to reporting on developments via the INQAAHE website;
- In planning the biennial GA's to replace the regional meetings, by meetings of representatives of the regions;
- By focussing more on inter regional issues at the INQAAHE workshops and biennial conference;
- By setting up a structure for exchange of information and good practices among the networks;
- By giving of help and advice to new networks setting up.

The plan of action proposed by the board received support from the members and the board will proceed accordingly.

David Woodhouse advised the GA that the APQN (Asia-Pacific Quality Network) is being developed to enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them. He also advised that the APQN had offered a reduced membership fee for members of INQAAHE.

#### 5. **Officers reports to General Assembly**

##### **Richard Lewis, President of INQAAHE**

Richard Lewis advised that a more formal report would be circulated shortly to the members of INQAAHE. In the meantime the following items were reported to the GA:

Appointment of Secretariat – Richard Lewis advised that the secretary to INQAAHE had been provided on a voluntary basis for eleven years but there was a limit to the support that could be expected and rather than relying on the volunteers who served INQAAHE so well in the past it was agreed at the Dublin Conference, held in 2003, that a paid Secretariat be appointed. The board invited the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) of Ireland, and the Council's Chief Executive, Séamus Puirseil to act as

the Network's Secretary for an initial period up to December 2004, this has since been extended to 2007. Richard Lewis expressed his gratitude to Séamus Puirseil and Ann Graves from HETAC for all their work since the appointment of the Secretariat.

**INQAAHE Membership** – The President noted the increase in membership, which has grown by 30 members over the past 18 months. The most significant increase has been in the Middle East and African regions. However it was noted that every effort will be made to ensure that new agencies are made aware of INQAAHE.

**Communication** – Richard Lewis advised that the methods of communication with the members were via the Journal, the QA newsletter, the website and regular bulletins from the Secretariat. He indicated the intention of the board to request feedback from the membership on their views on each of these methods of communication and possible ways of improvement.

**Links with International Bodies** - A significant development is the application to UNESCO for NGO status, INQAAHE has, in principle, been accepted we now await the formal acceptance.

**INQAAHE Development Fund** – Richard Lewis thanked those agencies that had contributed to the fund that is used to provide support to members and encouraged others to do so he also advised that INQAAHE has received US\$5,000 in support from UNESCO.

#### **Working Groups**

**Alternative forms of Quality Assurance** – Richard Lewis invited members who are interested in participating on this working group to contact INQAAHE. The purpose of this group will be to look at new methods of QA and ways in which QA improves following reviews.

**Regional Development** – Richard Lewis noted the impressive development in regional groups and the setting up of new groups in Asia Pacific, Middle East, Africa, Central America and the Caribbean regions. While some of these groups are independent of INQAAHE some are associated with the Network.

Richard Lewis thanked the outgoing board members for their work and contributions to the Network and welcomed the new board members.

#### **Séamus Puirseil, Secretary, INQAAHE**

Séamus Puirseil advised that HETAC had been appointed as Secretariat to the Network in September 2003. The main functions of the Secretariat to date have been:

- The servicing of board meetings whether held electronically or physically at the members' workshops and conferences;
- Serving as a member of the membership committee, offering advice to the committee and supporting its initiatives. He noted the diligence of Steven Crow and Dorte Kristoffersen in their responses and the ability to offer a reply to applicants, normally within 24 hours;
- Upgrading the Network website and circulating a regular bulletin to the members, the content of which is reliant on input from the members. Séamus Puirseil requested that contributions for future bulletins be forwarded to the Secretariat;
- Diligently supporting the conference committee and the local organisers in New Zealand;
- Completion of the external application to UNESCO;
- General support and working with the INQAAHE President;

Séamus Puirseil informed the GA that the Secretariat had learned how to operate in a 24-hour world. With the time differences it had become possible to start early and pick up messages from Asia/Pacific areas and respond before the Americas had started work. He thanked the members for their help and support and thanked Ann Graves for her support.

6. **Report from the Membership Committee**

Steven Crow reported on behalf of the membership committee. The membership of INQAAHE is now 161 members, which includes two members agreed at a meeting of the committee held in Wellington. There are 32 new members who have joined the Network over the past 18 months. Steven Crow also noted that the new style questionnaire form had enabled more efficient decisions and had also enabled a quicker response to applicants.

7. **Financial Matters**

The Financial Statement 2004 was agreed.

Richard Lewis noted that the role of the Treasurer had historically been concerned with bookkeeping and subscription collection and that these tasks were now undertaken by the secretariat. The constitution now makes provision for a Treasurer as a member of the board. The board will appoint a Treasurer whose main role will be take the lead in the consideration of the budget and on the setting of the membership fees.

The new board will consider the network's plan of activities for 2006 and 2007 and will, on that basis, recommend the subscription levels for these two years to members. This matter would be put to an electronic vote, that will be held no later than September 2005.

Richard Lewis advised that the board had discussed the development fund and there will be no major shift in policy. T Szanto had drafted a discussion document as a review of procedures that was considered by the board. Richard Lewis thanked T Szanto for his work in this area.

8. **Reports from the Journal and Newsletter Editors**

Richard Lewis noted that Lee Harvey was absent from the GA due to illness and the report on the journal would be circulated to members electronically, the President thanked Lee Harvey for leading his discussion forum particularly under the circumstances.

Richard Lewis thanked Peter Cheung from HKCAA for the work on the newsletter. Peter Cheung noted that the success of the QA newsletter depended on the receipt of useful information and that he would need to get additional contributions from members. It was agreed following discussion that the board will discuss the newsletter and consider it together with the bulletin and the website in the questionnaire to be circulated to members on communications.

9. **External Review of Quality Assurance Agencies**

Séamus Puirseil advised the GA that a request had been received by INQAAHE from Comision Nacional De Acreditacion De Pregrado, Chile (CNAP) to undertake a review of the agency. A working group has been set up to arrange the review with a visit planned for July 2005 and reporting back to the board. INQAAHE welcomed the request and will use the Guidelines as a basis for the review. It is envisaged that this type of exercise will develop over the next couple of years.

10. **Future Events**

**2006 Workshop** – Richard Lewis noted that the Network had received an invitation from Nederlands – Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie (NVAO) for the workshop. An additional bid was received following the cut off date of 18 February and the board agreed that it would not recommend it to be considered by the GA as it was received after the NVAO bid had been circulated to all members.

Mark Fredericks of the NVAO presented the proposal to the GA. Following discussion it was agreed that the bid be reviewed to reduce costs. Séamus Puirseil noted that the proposal from NVAO was received following circulation of the bid document, which did

not differentiate between conferences and workshops. It was noted that the board had a detailed discussion on the proposal and would further discuss with the organisers.

Richard Lewis formally proposed that INQAAHE accept the invitation by Nederlands – Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie (NVAO) to host the member's workshop. This was accepted.

**2007 Biennial Conference** – Richard Lewis noted that the Network had received an invitation from the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) to host the 2007 conference.

Donald Baker presented the proposal on behalf of PEQAB and proposed that the Conference be held on 2–5 April 2007.

Richard Lewis formally proposed that INQAAHE accept the invitation to host the biennial conference in Toronto. This was accepted.

11. **Election of INQAAHE President and Board**

The results of the INQAAHE election had been previously circulated to the members. Séamus Puirseil announced the results of the election and formally congratulated Richard Lewis, President of INQAAHE and the incoming board on their election.

Richard Lewis, President  
Dorte Kristoffersen  
Donald Baker  
Marjorie Peace Lenn  
Tibor Szanto  
V.S. Prasad

12. Any other business properly arising.  
There was no other business raised.

Richard Lewis thanked the members for their attendance at the 2005 General Assembly and the meeting was closed.