



**Chair's report
2004-2005**

Introduction

My report to members will focus on the work of FACE throughout what has been a very busy yet highly productive year. I am delighted to say that it has been a particularly positive year for the network with much progress made in a number of key operational areas. I will say more about this shortly in relation to each area. Policy changes including reductions in funding in a number of areas of adult and continuing education have impacted heavily on member institutions and organisations. I have in mind here the funding cuts announced during the year by the LSC. As noted in last years report the impact of top-up fees in HE is likely to lead to greater differentiation both between learner groups as well as HEIs and FECs. There is enormous uncertainty for example in relation to part-time learners.

The role of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) in England will be critical to both safeguard and ensure HE opportunities for learners from poor backgrounds. In relation to Tomlinson and 14-19 provision another area of concern for members it was disappointing and a lost opportunity that the government decided not to implement many of the Committees key proposals. One final and very significant development on the national policy landscape has been the introduction in England of Lifelong Learning Networks to promote HE progression opportunities from vocational provision. In welcoming this initiative FACE noted this represented a very restricted interpretation of Lifelong Learning and will therefore be looking to persuade Government and funders of the need to develop a more expansive approach coupled with an appropriate set of funding arrangements.

In many ways policy development relating to Lifelong Learning in England has fallen behind the initiatives being taken forward in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The 2005 Annual Conference will therefore focus on the sharing of practice and policy in this area. As well as working in a rapidly changing context in the UK another aspect of our work during the year has been the further development of international links. FACE has worked closely with both the European Universities Network for Continuing Education and also our partner network in the USA the National Association for Development Education. FACE representatives have participated in the annual conferences of the both organisations and we look forward to welcoming representatives of both to our 2005 Annual Conference in Cork.

As Chair it has been a great pleasure for me to have worked with the Executive Committee during what has been an extremely positive and productive year of activities and services to members. The network is in excellent shape and continues to be a vibrant and powerful voice on the major issues facing members and their institutions.

I will now provide a summary report on each of the networks main areas of operations and activities since the last AGM.

The Executive Committee

The work of the Executive Committee is I believe one of the main reasons for the continuing success of FACE. We are fortunate indeed to have a highly talented and conscientious committee who give generously of their time and talents to manage and guide the network. As Chair I have benefited enormously from the support and advice of the committee and want to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone for their contributions throughout the year. The agendas for the Executive meetings of which there were six during the last year focused on a wide range of areas including:

- Membership services
- Membership analysis
- Staffing
- External relations
- National policy development
- Publications
- Conference planning
- Finance

- Website
- Newsletter
- Marketing and publicity

Executive meetings have provided an opportunity for detailed discussions to take place on these and other aspects of the network's activities. A major piece of work undertaken by the Executive was the preparation of our 2005-2007 Development Plan. The process for this vital exercise involved the Executive working in four sub-committees on each of the main parts of the plan. For this round of planning, the Executive also held a planning day where detailed discussion took place and reports prepared. The outcome is a challenging and forward looking plan that will provide the strategic framework for the network until 2007. The plan will be reviewed and updated at regular intervals to ensure its continuing value to the development of FACE.

As I have noted, the Executive have done a tremendous job and so it is sad when members have to step down. Two members who have left the Executive this year are Carmel Dennison and Maree Walker. Carmel has for the last three years been managing editor of the networks newsletter – "Face-to-Face". Carmel has done a wonderful job and has added tremendous value and creativity to the newsletter. It is in excellent shape and her contribution is much appreciated and will be greatly missed. The good news is that Executive member Steve Lake has kindly agreed to take on the editor's role and we wish him well in this key position.

Maree Walker our long standing Treasurer announced that she will also be standing down. FACE has been enormously lucky to have had Maree in this extremely important role. In very large part the excellent financial position that the network is currently in is due to Maree's careful management and prudent financial advice. Maree has put in place effective systems and has provided the Executive with accurate high quality financial information on which to base its income and expenditure decisions. As Chair I have worked extremely closely with Maree over the years and have greatly appreciated both her professional approach but equally her kindness and sense of humour. On behalf of the Executive and members I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Maree for her unique contribution to FACE. As our proposed new Treasurer we are fortunate to have an experienced member of the Executive in Anne Lines. I am sure she will do an excellent job and look forward to working with her in this new role.

Member Services

Membership levels have been further consolidated this year with more movement in relation to institutional membership. We have seen an increasing take up of the full allocation of institutional member places which is a pleasing trend. This suggests that the membership base is developing within institutions and organisations that are in membership. Distribution data on membership in relation to UK and non-UK indicates a good spread across the UK and retention of non-UK members. An analysis of membership forms a key part of the planning which informed the new development plan. Targets for membership growth were agreed and these were linked to other parts of the plan and will be taken forward in the network's marketing and promotional activities over the coming year. Both the retention and growth of members are seen by the Executive as critical to the future. As a network we must pay attention to both of these and in so doing manage the respective resources devoted to each. I have said in previous reports that both member recruitment and retention ultimately depend on the relevance and quality and values which inform the services we offer. Let me now therefore comment on services taking account of each of these factors.

I am pleased to report that we have continued to provide a wide range of services to members and have looked to improve these in line with members' feedback and budgetary limits. The Executive has reviewed the provision the Events Coordinator and reshaped the existing role. The outcome of this process has been that in future the events coordinator will be based within a member institution and work with a named member of the Executive Committee. We are currently in discussion with an HEI and hope to put in place the new arrangements for the next academic year. The website is proving very popular from the user

data provided by Jim Tate. Websites are by nature material hungry and so Jim would welcome more members getting in touch with possible contributions.

Another service for members which has been further developed this year has been our members' newsletter. As already mentioned we have a new editor Steve Lake, and Steve and his team are putting together a new look newsletter with its first edition due to be launched at the Annual Conference in Cork. I would strongly encourage members to contribute to the newsletter as we are keen to build on the role the newsletter plays as a means of sharing members experience and views on issues of concern to them throughout the year.

In summary I believe we have maintained and progressed aspects of member services whilst recognising through the targets in the new development plan that we need to continue to make even more progress. A challenge for the coming year!

Administration

Our administrator Jackie Leach has continued to provide a high level of service to members throughout the year and I would like to thank Jackie for her work. Jackie's work covers a wide range of tasks. There have been regular mailings to members providing information on FACE activities. Throughout the course of the year the administrative base deals with not only member communications but also the processing of new members and liaison with the Executive Committee. The University of East London has kindly hosted our administrative service and we are most grateful for this support.

Annual Conference

The University of Portsmouth was our excellent host for our 2004 conference. The conference team did a superb job in providing a high quality conference greatly appreciated by the many delegates that attended and provided their feedback. Thank you to everyone at Portsmouth who contributed so much to such a successful and memorable event. The publication of the Conference Proceedings is always a much awaited event in the FACE events calendar. This year's proceedings were no exception with a tremendous job being done by the editorial team under the expert guidance of the lead editor, Tony Acland. A debt of gratitude is therefore owed to Tony and his team for all their efforts.

This year the conference will be hosted by University College Cork and we look forward to our first ever conference in Ireland.

Finance

As already noted Maree Walker, our Treasurer is stepping down this year and will be presenting her final report. I will therefore highlight a couple of major headlines on our finances this year. Our income profile continues to be strong with good levels of revenue being generated through subscriptions and also conference franchising. As a result we have been able to balance our budget and in the process add to the reserve fund. The Executive reviews finances at each of its meetings and is therefore able to make executive decisions in light of the most up to date financial information. Finance was another core area in our 2005-2007 Development Plan and therefore the Executive has agreed a budget with interim targets for this period. This will be monitored on an ongoing basis and adjusted as appropriate by the Executive. The clear message is that FACE continues to be in a strong financial position and has an approved plan for both income and expenditure until 2007. I commend this position to the membership.

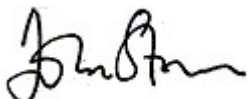
External Relations

It has been a busy year so far as external links and relations are concerned. We were delighted to have representatives at both the National Association of Development Education Annual Conference in the USA and also the European Universities Continuing Education Network Conference in Norway. We continue to build links with both and explore ways in which we can work more effectively together. A major part of my time as Chair has involved

representing FACE at a variety of meetings and functions throughout the year. These include both governmental and non-governmental organisations and the major stakeholders involved in the different educational sectors. FACE members take an active part and play key roles with national, regional and local organisations and collectively have made a major contribution through these links. Such work not only helps to raise the profile of FACE but also assists in getting members voices heard on a range of issues. I have been in direct correspondence, on a number of occasions, with government ministers to raise questions about policy changes to ensure the FACE position is known and understood. The capacity of FACE to influence policy debates and developments in areas affecting members and their institutions continues to grow. Here again is an important feature of our new development plan and we shall be aiming to ensure that FACE is a confident and active participant in national policy developments.

Concluding Comments

As my report has indicated it has been a really productive and busy year for FACE. Good progress has been made in all major aspects of the networks services and we continue to maintain a strong financial base for our work. Important service improvements have been put in train and a new development plan has been prepared and agreed. For these and other reasons I believe FACE is a vibrant and effective network providing an increasingly valued space for members. I would very much like, in closing, to thank all my fellow members of the Executive for their support and advice throughout the year and most importantly FACE members for their continuing support and involvement.



Professor John Storan

Chair