

Argyll College

Strategic Plan

2006/7-2008/9

June 2006

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Section 1

Mission Statement

Argyll College, as part of the UHI Millennium Institute, will provide accessible education and training of the highest standard, to support the development of people, businesses and communities in Argyll and the Islands.

Section 2

Value Statements

Given the partnership with North Highland College, Argyll College has based the value statements on those already agreed by North Highland College. These are as follows:

Adding Value to Communities

Argyll College values the communities it works within and is committed to providing education and training support that assists those communities economically and socially.

The Learning Environment

Argyll College is committed to providing high quality learning environments. These will range from provision within our 11 (soon to be 12) learning centres, to centres within the community such as schools and village halls through to on line learning using a variety of delivery platforms.

Equality of Access to Education and Training

The board of Argyll College believes that all members of the community are entitled to equality of access to lifelong learning regardless of geographical location. Argyll College will apply policies and implement procedures to provide learning opportunities to everyone in the community, as far as is practicable. Argyll College will identify and use new and innovative learning methods to help ensure equality of access.

Parity of Esteem

The college has a wide customer base: from degree level students to those with some form of learning difficulty; from full time students to those doing very short courses and from those studying in a traditional taught basis to those studying flexibly and at their own pace. The college will value all customers equally. The focus on appropriate client groups will be as outlined in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992.

Quality

The board of Argyll College has an ongoing commitment to continuous quality improvement. This underpins our philosophy and has been recognised by a number of external agencies. The college has been awarded Investor in People status; holds the Scottish Quality Management System award and has Scottish Qualifications Authority Approved Centre status. The board will work with the college staff to develop and maintain these but will do so in tandem with North Highland College and will work increasingly within the quality systems of that college. Argyll College

recognises that a strong focus on customer need drives the quality of the college's delivery.

Section 3

Evaluation of Previous Plan

This section summarises the achievements set out in the plan covering the 2003 to 2006 period.

Partnership with North Highland College

This is now well established and working well for both organisations.

Other Partnerships

Other partnerships are working well and have been strengthened by continued co-operation. A key development in the last few years has been the successful Construction Excellence partnership which has ultimately led to the creation of the Construction Skills Training Centre in Lochgilphead. Work is about to commence on this and it should be open for the start of academic year 2007/8.

FE Activity & Delivery

With the college gaining formula based SUMS funding from the start of the NHC partnership, it is, for the most part, treated in the same way as other islands based colleges. The lack of SUMS growth so far has been problematic. All of the learning centres now have access to the UHI WAN and this is allowing improved delivery throughout a geographically dispersed area.

HE Activity & Delivery

Growth in this area has been slow, but steady and the estates improvements over the last few years have provided improved facilities to deliver this activity. The imminent development of a much larger centre in Lochgilphead will contribute to further growth in the next few years.

Estates

Significant progress has been achieved in the development and enhancement of the estates. The childcare nursery building at Dunstaffnage is now open (August 2006) and will provide an important facility at this site.

The new construction skills centre will also fill a large gap in construction skills training within the area and open up new opportunities for working with this sector.

Other learning centres have also undergone extension/space re-organisation in line with student needs in each area.

ICT

A major upgrading of IT provision has been undertaken in the last few years. Student access has been improved and is a major benefit to the college's customers.

Areas for Development

Work is ongoing to develop other curriculum areas for the college. These will widen choice for students and will replace areas where demand is weakening.

Finance

The changeover to formula based WSUMs funding is beginning to show benefits with the college on a stronger financial footing and able to plan ahead. Turnover continues to increase year on year and it is expected that this pattern will continue with various new projects contributing to the overall sustainability of the college. Support from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in the number of SUMs awarded in the future will be key to this.

Staffing and Staff Development

A review of the staffing structure and requirements has been undertaken and the organisation is operating effectively within the budgets allocated.

Staff development continues to be a priority and wherever possible staff are encouraged to undertake continued professional development (CPD).

Section 4

Background, achievements to date and environmental analysis.

1. Background

Argyll and the Islands had never had a further education college until the Argyll College project started. Provision was characterised by: being subject to allocations of special funding; small scale provision being made available in some of the larger towns; a narrow range of course availability; lack of progression; what little there was being FE rather than HE and a variety of providers, often subsidised by others, working in an uncoordinated manner.

The allocation of Millennium Commission funds to UHI and the support for UHI from the then Secretary of State for Scotland, opened an opportunity for a college to develop in the area. DTZ Peda carried out a demand analysis for Argyll & Islands Enterprise which, for the first time, provided a statistical basis to back up what local people already knew, ie uptake rates for FE were low and that this was mainly due to lack of locally based provision.

The enterprise company formed a partnership in early 1997 with the local authority to implement a key recommendation of the Peda report, namely to set up a small enabling organisation to source funding and to develop mechanisms for course delivery, in partnership with others. Argyll College was born.

2. Geography and Location of Centres

Like our partner North Highland College, the geography of the area covered by the college is a key environmental driver.

Argyll College covers an area of Scotland that is characterised by having a huge landmass, a low average density of population, towns at the periphery of the area, more people living on islands than in the Western Isles and a coastline longer than that of France.

The college's 11 learning centres now allow a majority of the population to have greatly improved access to learning. However, there are still areas with moderate populations where access is far from simple. Appendix 3 shows a map of the area and the locations of the existing centres. Appendix 2 gives an outline of where the population is located in the area.

3. Scottish Funding Council

The board of the college took a unanimous decision in favour of a partnership with North Highland College in June 2002. Following correspondence between North Highland College and the then Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC), SFEFC agreed to this partnership and to a formula based funding package for Argyll College.

4. UHI Millennium Institute

Argyll College is a partner in the UHI Millennium Institute and benefits from the remote delivery of degree provision to the learning centres. Increasingly Argyll College delivers higher education in its own right albeit in a small way, eg some HN units, Cisco CCNA, Assessor and verifier units, HNC Childcare and Education.

5. European Social Fund

Argyll College has been successful in having 21 ESF bids approved over the past several years and this has been an important source of funding, especially prior to formula funding from SFC being agreed. The current programme of ESF funding will close at the end of 2006 and work is currently underway to agree priorities and measures for the subsequent programme.

Argyll College will work with Highlands & Islands Partnership Programme staff to ensure maximum utilisation of future ESF funding.

6. Relationship with Argyll & Islands Enterprise (AIE)

AIE [and Highland & Islands Enterprise (HIE)] has been a stalwart supporter of Argyll College from the start and has been the driving force in ensuring the development of the college from a laudable idea to the operational college it is today. The activities of the college relate directly to the Smart, Successful, Scotland – Highlands & Islands priorities. For full details see <http://www.hie.co.uk/HIE-Network-Operating-Plan-2006-09.pdf>

7. Relationship with Argyll & Bute Council

The local authority was, with AIE, one of the 2 founding members of the Argyll College company and the council has also supported the college since inception. Four of the premises used by the college are owned by the local authority and are leased on a peppercorn rent basis. Land has been purchased by the council for the new construction skills training centre in Lochgilphead and this will also be the subject of a peppercorn lease. The community education service of the local authority also provides the college with competition in most of the area due to the relationship it has with 2 other FE colleges. However, in 2 areas, the college works in partnership with community education.

8. Achievements to date

From a standing start around the turn of the year 1999 to 2000, Argyll College has enrolled some 14,700 students to date. The table below illustrates the annual growth in enrolments

Year	Total Enrolments
2000/01	1283
2001/02	2617
2002/03	2604
2003/04	2729
2004/05	2324
2005/06	3156

During the first three years, enrolments were through a variety of partner colleges, notably Perth, Lews Castle and North Highland Colleges, and thereafter all enrolments were via the partnership with NHC. There are clear customer preferences towards ICT and care provision, the majority of students are female and the majority are returners to education rather than young people leaving school. There are subject areas where there is little or no activity and these are potential areas for development as outlined later in this plan.

9. Financial Position

The table below illustrates the continued financial growth and stability of the college. The degree of stability has been improved significantly since the partnership with North Highland College and the formula based funding agreed.

Argyll College have also sought, wherever possible, to maximise the level of funding from other sources, in particular when undertaking capital projects. These sources have included the public agencies already mentioned, private trusts, the Lottery and ERDF.

Financial Year	Turnover	Surplus	Net worth
2000/01	757,199	29,086	1,866,310
2001/02	1,194,035	22,660	2,146,143
2002/03	1,457,601	35,857	1,975,098
2003/04	1,353,107	10,652	1,968,091
2004/05	1,381,876	26,649	2,016,853
2005/06(projected)	1,385,485	54,146	2,522,113

10. Estates

Eight centres were opened around the period late 1999 to mid 2000. These were in Dunoon, Rothesay, Islay, Campbeltown, Dunstaffnage, Tiree, Fionnphort and Tobermory. In 2001 the centre in Arran was opened and this is run jointly with James Watt College. In 2002 the centre in Lochgilphead was opened and this completed the initial development of the Argyll College estate. A small centre at Here We Are visitor centre, near Loch Fyne Oysters at Cairndow opened in 2003. The latest development is the new Childcare facility at the Dunstaffnage Learning Centre which will open on the 18th August 2006. This will provide the college with the facilities to offer a childcare facility for students attending the centre, a number of commercial places for the local workforce as well as providing work placements for college students studying childcare qualifications

Other major projects in the pipeline include:

- Construction Skills Training Centre in Lochgilphead

- Following the successful purchase of larger premises in Lochgilphead there is a need to upgrade and develop/equip these.

It is hoped that both of these projects will be complete by mid 2007.

Wherever possible, all new estates developments will be in premises that are owned by the college. This has the advantage of increasing the capital assets of the college and reducing the ongoing burden of rental/lease costs.

A key component of all future estates activity will be to try and ensure maximum use of renewable energy options. The first main project to address this will be the new Construction Skills Training centre in Lochgilphead which will maximise the benefits from wind, solar and ground source heat. Within 5 years it is hoped that up to 15% of the total energy requirements of the college will be produced from renewables. This target is based upon the availability of funding to undertake the installation of such technology as these can add considerably to the cost of a development.

In addition to the utilisation of renewable power sources emphasis will also be placed on ensuring the use of sustainable building materials and energy saving devices eg automatic taps, motion sensor lighting and the use of grey water wherever possible and practical.

A full estates review, by learning centre is described in detail at section 19

11. ICT and related issues

In the previous strategic plan reference was made to the need to replace and upgrade ageing computer equipment despite the fact the college had no funding stream with which to do this. That remained the case until early 2006 when funding from LearnDirect Scotland for the 2 smallest centres, Tiree and Fionnphort, became available. This funding was used to lever additional funding from Argyll & Islands Enterprise and a major replacement/upgrading was carried out in March/April 2006. There are still a number of PCs that require to be upgraded but most centres now have modern PCs and associated equipment. Consideration will now need to be given as to how we continue this process over the next few years. Not being able to reclaim VAT means that leasing is not as attractive as it might be but it will be a key strategic aim to have a replacement procedure in place by the end of calendar year 2006.

12. Staffing and Staff Development

The college has grown from having a single member of staff in 1998 to having around 250 staff today, the majority of whom are part time. An organisation chart is attached at appendix 1.

One of the benefits of having started the college from scratch has been the ability to staff the operation and pay salaries that are not necessarily bound by historical convention. This has helped the college make efficient

use of staff and allowed progress towards the achievement of 2 key goals: one is to find ways of teaching in a smarter, more efficient manner and the other is to pay the highest feasible rates to teachers. The combination of these allows teaching costs for the college to be affordable.

13. Non SFC funded education and training




Staff time has been heavily involved in creating and operating, in cooperation with our partner colleges, the mainstream provision of any FE college and other business opportunities have not had the attention they might otherwise have had. Recently, however, more and more such opportunities have arisen and paragraph 24 of the plan tries to identify where these opportunities lie. A greater spread of income sources is needed and all of these have to be more profitable to allow overall margins to increase.

Section 5 Current Plan 2006/7-2008/9

14. Partnership with North Highland College.

The board of Argyll College is committed to the new partnership with North Highland College and now has 3 years of experience of what has become a successful partnership. This means that the board and staff of Argyll College will work with the board and staff of North Highland College to ensure that the partnership is effective; that it produces benefits and efficiencies for both partners and, most of all, that the partnership produces tangible and measurable benefits for the people of Argyll & the Islands.

During the last 3 years the partnership has achieved the following:

-  Good working relationship which now sees 4500 WSUMs being delivered by Argyll College. There is a legally based agreement which satisfies the needs of both organisations. This model is now also being adopted as a way of promoting future strategic growth in both Lochaber and Skye and Lochalsh.
-  Number of teaching staff has risen to approximately 200 (38.75 on an FTE basis) and delivery of the curriculum is to a high standard and in line with North Highland College quality assurance systems.
-  Major improvements have been made to open learning materials with assistance from ESF.

15. Other Partnerships

The UHI partnership, together with the associated organisations of AIE and HIE, will continue to be a major area of partnership activity. The goal

of realising a university of the Highlands & Islands will only be realised by developing and strengthening this partnership.

The college has been active at various levels in Argyll in the community learning strategy partnership led by the council's community education service. However, there remain issues over the effectiveness of the partnership. To try and resolve these, the college will attempt to agree a strategic agreement with the community education service. Any such agreement will have to have local operational benefits for the community.

The college has already started to develop operational partnerships with large employers, eg the local authority, the health board and tourist board. A key project which Argyll College delivered on behalf of Argyll & Bute Council was the training element of the Digital Communities Initiative. This project resulted in an additional 682 SUMs being delivered on a full cost recovery basis. Continued partnerships similar to this are important to the future development of Argyll College and the region.

A strong relationship with the businesses of the area is also a vital component of the college's future development and the new construction skills training centre will provide the first real link to the construction sector in the area.

Argyll College will work closely with Careers Scotland. This relationship will also include working with Future Skills Scotland and data produced will help shape course delivery and content in the future. More information can be found at

<http://www.futureskillscotland.org.uk/web/site/home/home.asp>

16. FE Activity

This section is written in the knowledge that there are constraints on Argyll College's ability to grow. There are two main constraints. One is the expectation of little or no growth in the FE sector in Scotland and whether or not an exception will be made by SFC for Argyll. The other is Argyll College's ability to deliver greater growth due to space limitations.

At least one of these constraints, space limitations, will be addressed when the new learning centre in Lochgilphead opens. It is projected, subject to SFC providing the required level of FE SUMs growth that this centre should be capable of delivering an additional 550 FE SUMs within 5 years. This would take total FE SUMs delivered to just over 5,000.

Financial projections previously undertaken, show that Argyll College will operate at about break even once delivering c 4,500 FE SUMs per annum and become profitable at somewhere in excess of 5,000 SUMs per annum.

17. Delivery of FE

The way in which FE is delivered in Argyll College is a major strategic issue and needs to be dealt with in some detail. To enable a broad range of curriculum to be delivered in an area with such a scattered population requires a number of delivery options to be in place to enable effective and efficient FE to be delivered. A key advance in this area is the connection of 8 out of the 11 learning centres to the UHI Wider Area Network, with the remaining 3 in the final stages of being connected.

Argyll College started off on the basis that the bulk of delivery would be on an open learning basis. Very quickly it became clear that, given a choice, students prefer to be taught and there is now a range of delivery from traditional paper based open learning to fully taught classes. Some of this delivery does not have a good record of success with high drop out rates. Some of it has a higher success rate but also a very high teaching cost associated with it. With the development of the partnership with North Highland College, more and more of the tutorial delivery will be carried out by Argyll College staff.

This more local delivery of teaching provides an opportunity to develop a variety of delivery methods that are effective (in terms of students completing the course successfully) and efficient (in terms of the unit costs of teaching). The control of teaching costs is seen as one of the biggest challenges the college will face over the next few years. Teaching smarter and more efficiently will enable Argyll College to achieve the goal of ensuring that teaching staff are paid a rate within the top quartile of teaching rates in Scotland. This has benefits for both the college and the student in that staff turnover should be low, students receive the best tutoring and the impact on the local economy is greater.

There will be a number of delivery models to meet student need and these are as follows:

Model 1: Open Learning where students can start at any time and without needing minimum numbers of students.

Experience has shown that this kind of open learning only works properly when 3 things happen. The first is that the course needs to be quite heavily structured, ie clear time constraints on the overall course and on the achievement points within the course so that the student knows what is expected of him or her from the start. The second is that tutorial staff are paid on the basis of outputs, not time spent. The third is that the onus needs to be on the tutor to make contact with the student, not the other way about as is so often the case elsewhere. This model will cover both traditional paper based open learning together with on line delivery using, in the near future, UHI's web based learning platform, CLAN.

Model 2: Open Learning where students have optional access to pre-arranged tutorials and where there is a minimum number of students needed to start the course.

In this model, students receive an open learning pack but instead of being allocated an individual tutor, they have the option of attending tutorials with other students doing the same course. Typically, students will be able to attend for up to 20 hours of tutorials for a nominal 40 hour course. Attendance is not mandatory. What is essential, however, is the need for students to carry out study and assessments between tutorial sessions to ensure that the group completes the course as a group. With this model, the group size can be smaller than in Model 3.

Model 3: Fully taught classes where attendance is mandatory and where no open learning packs are issued.

This is the more traditional model of delivery and needs little by way of explanation. However, it is expensive and requires a reasonably large class size to allow the course to proceed. It also has the potential to disappoint prospective students if the minimum numbers are not reached. One way of trying to ensure the minimum numbers are reached is to use technology to allow remote teaching to take place. For example, the tutor can be located in one centre with a small number of students and be connected (by video conferencing, for example) to one or more other centres with small numbers in each. This method has some disadvantages in that technical failure can create problems. It also carries with it training needs for tutors to ensure that both the local and remote students get equal amounts of the tutor's attention and time. Lastly, there seems to be an expectation from both customers and partner organisations that there needs to be 40 hours teaching time for a nominal 40 hour course. Research needs to be done to enable a decision to be reached on the teaching time actually needed, course by course and taking into account customers' learning needs.

FE activity over the last 3 years indicates that all 3 models are being used. While model 2 is the most efficient, customer demand for model 3 remains high and the college has to respond to that demand.


18. HE activity


Argyll College, as one of the UHI partners, fully subscribes to the objectives of the UHI Strategic Plan. The UHI Strategic Plan can be read at:

<http://www.uhi.ac.uk/publications/summpln.pdf>

HE activity has been increasing steadily and is without doubt an continuing area of potential growth. As more UHI courses are available for network delivery, more use can be made of these by remote students. There is also an expectation that the UHI Resource Allocation Model will be refined to reward partners who provide networked courses which should further increase availability.

The plan is that the HE activity in Argyll will be in the following areas:

 Degree courses delivered remotely to Argyll based students, using video conferencing etc. There are a range of logistical problems to be overcome to ensure the maximum delivery of these courses. A key issue is the need for more centralised planning of lecture and tutorial times to avoid bottlenecks in the video conferencing timetable and local availability of equipment. Argyll College's view is that much more delivery needs to be done in the late afternoons, early evenings and weekends if these problems are to be minimised. Argyll College also needs to have appropriate space and equipment in order to cope with additional VC based delivery and this is referred to later in the estates section of this document.

 Locally delivered HE, eg HN units, mostly for students doing part time courses, eg evening classes and open learning. In 2006-7 a full time HNC in Childcare and Education is being delivered for the first time. There are a number of staff training and QA issues associated with this.

The table below indicates the growth in HE provision since 2001/2. Also shown here is the projected growth for 2006/07.

Year	HE Income Generated
2001/2	£20,000
2002/3	£26,000
2003/4	£33,000
2004/5	£43,500
2005/6	£59,000
2006/7	£144,000 (projected)

19. Estates

This section of the strategic plan is the most critical element of the plan. This is because a number of the objectives of the plan can only be achieved if additional learning space is made available. The longer term objectives of providing Argyll and the islands with a high quality college of FE and an equally high quality university campus can only be achieved after significant investment in property and facilities.

Argyll College has been a success and that success has been founded on close attention to what customers want and the provision of that demand from very modest premises. For some time now a number of the learning centres have been very short of space. The space pressures have come about with increased demand for taught provision at FE level. In addition, increasing numbers of HE students studying on the basis of remote teaching from other UHI partners have shown that the college needs more but smaller learning spaces, eg room space for up to 6 students with video conferencing facilities.

There is a summary of estimated costs and possible funding options shown at the end of this paper. This part of the strategic plan has been written after consultation with The Argyll Partnership, the college project managers.

A key consideration within the future estates developments will be to try and incorporate a renewable energy element into every new development. This will be dependant on the availability of funding to support these additional costs. An initial target of generating at least 15% of power requirements from renewable sources within 5 years has been set.

Lochgilphead

New, larger premises in Lochgilphead have just been secured and these will address the severe lack of space in the current learning centre. The premises have been purchased with assistance from Argyll & the Islands Enterprise with the remainder being funded with a commercial loan. The proceeds from the sale of the existing centre will be utilised in the new construction skills training centre.

The new premises will require some space re-organisation and upgrading and an application has been submitted to the Scottish Funding Council to assist with these costs. To date SFC has not agreed to assist with this work. Assuming funds can be found, it is anticipated that these works will be completed at the end of 2006 with the new centre opening for business in January 2007.

The new premises will enable significant growth in activity within Lochgilphead and enable the delivery of additional FE and HE activity.

Lochgilphead: Construction Skills Centre

There is at present a £1.1m funding package in place to create a bespoke facility for construction skills on a site to be leased from Argyll & Bute Council within Kilmory Industrial Estate. The planned opening date is summer 2007 and costs are estimate at £1.2m. There is a plan in place to bridge the current funding gap by early 2007. This is a major strategic development of the training and education infrastructure for Argyll.

Islay

Internal partitioning of the current space will help provide the smaller learning areas referred to above. This work is planned to start in late summer 2006 funded by the other occupant of the building, Careers Scotland.

Dunoon

The Dunoon centre was extended 3 years ago to provide office space for the open learning unit. The centre now needs additional classroom space and drawings, costings and planning permission are all in place to create

an extension at the other end of the property. There is potential, subject to planning permission, to use the ground surrounding the Dunoon centre to create a small horticulture unit to enable the college to meet local demand, particularly for students with special needs. The estimated costs in the table at the end of this section include both the extension and the creation of the horticulture unit.

Campbeltown

A number of approaches have been made to Argyll & Bute Council for additional space within the present building over the past few years. Now that the council has completed a review of all its property in the town, the college has given the council a number of suggestions on how additional space could be provided and a reply is awaited. The estimated spend in the table below is based on the optimum amount of space being made available by the council. This centre is under severe space pressure and if an early agreement cannot be obtained with the council, the college will have to look at alternative options outwith the current premises including renting a new, bespoke property on the outskirts of the town. The present location is preferable, however, and it is hoped agreement with the council can be reached soon.

Dunstaffnage

This is the largest Argyll College centre. This is also the centre where there is the greatest potential for a major development, not least because the college has land available for that development. The proposals below also involve another UHI partner, the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS). The proposals, in summary, are as follows:

- Creation of 50 single en suite accommodation units.
- Creation of conference and teaching facilities to cater for a variety of markets including business from UHI partners including SAMS.
- Creation of a catering facility for both the accommodation units and conference facility.
- An extension to the current Argyll College building to create additional teaching space.
- The enclosure and development of land to create a horticultural unit.
- Internal alterations to current building to create additional teaching space by sub dividing existing space.

In addition to the learning centre a new, purpose built childcare facility is due to open in August 2006. This will provide up to 32 childcare places. This project will enable Argyll College to increase the range of childcare qualifications it can deliver and provide a revenue stream from the provision of childcare places.

Rothesay & Arran

These centres are being relocated to the sites of the new schools being built in Rothesay and Lamlash. While the area available for college use will not increase, the quality of the buildings will albeit, in Rothesay's case, at the expense of location.

Costs

The costs are shown in the table below. At this point, given the scale of what is proposed, no funding sources are shown. This is because it is clear that a major element of the funding has to come from the private sector and until the extent of that is known, it is hard to project what other funders may contribute. However, this is very far from a fanciful wish list; this is a serious and ambitious plan to create a major campus in Argyll and it is our intention to make this a major economic driver for the area.

Estates Review 2006		
Site	Work to be done	Estimated costs
Lochgilphead	purchase of new centre	£ 550,000
Construction Skills Centre	New Building	£ 1,010,000
Islay	Internal Partitioning	£ 16,675
Dunoon	Extension/horticulture	£ 226,000
Campbeltown	refurbish 2 new rooms	£ 98,000
Dunstaffnage	major development see text	£ 9,200,000
Rothesay & Arran	Relocating: incidental costs	£ 10,000
	Total	£ 10,560,675
These costs include professional fees and VAT. Some of these are fully costed while others remain budget amounts at this stage.		

20. ICT and related issues

A key requirement in the last strategic plan was to update around 90 PCs that were originally purchased in 2000/01. During the current year this has been achieved with support from LearnDirect Scotland and Argyll and the Islands Enterprise.

The other issue involved the speed with which user accounts could be created to enable new students to gain access to systems. A simple solution has now been found and implemented which now enables access to all resources the first time a student attends a tutorial.

21. Areas for development: customers and subject areas

Reference has already been made to the need to work with businesses in the area. Another area for development is with schools and school leavers. With support and guidance from North Highland College partnerships are beginning to be established with local schools. A key development in 2006/7 will be the introduction of the hairdressing and construction sector Skills For Work programme on Islay. This is based on a pilot which North Highland College developed. In addition discussions have taken place with Lochgilphead High School and they are keen to utilise Argyll College for the provision of the Skills for Work agenda activity. This particular activity is dependant on a larger learning centre opening in Lochgilphead once the newly purchased surgery premises are refurbished.

The ability to deliver Highers and Advanced Highers is a further area for development, most likely in partnership with other UHI partners.

The enrolment statistics show a heavy bias towards female students. In order to meet the lifelong learning agenda, more males need to be attracted back to learning. It is expected that the opening of the new construction skills training centre will help address this bias.

Equestrian courses and the BA in Golf Management, a UHI Degree led by North Highland College both offer potential areas of growth in the Argyll area. Negotiation with North Highland College will be required to try and offer these in the future.

Horticultural is a potential area for development and is carried over from the previous strategic plan. With the proposed developments at Dunstaffnage and Dunoon it may be possible to include this type of activity in future years.

Special needs is an area for further development and this can best be done with North Highland College. Since the last strategic plan we have implemented the systems and procedures used by North Highland College and in the current year around 9% of students are within this category. Further work is required to increase this level of participation and this will involve close collaboration with the community education service.

22. Finance

Please refer to section 9.

23. Staffing and Staff Development

Please refer to section 12.

24. Other Areas of Development

The college will investigate ways of increasing the income generated from running Skillseekers and other government training programme activities. Progress in this area has been achieved utilising the knowledge and experience of North Highland College. This area of activity will contribute around £27,000 in additional income in the current financial year.

The inclusion of an integrated renewables element in the new construction skills training centre will act as a demonstration project for the sector and hopefully lead to opportunities for the college to develop bespoke training in the installation of these devices within both commercial and private building projects. Given the priority with which renewables have within current Scottish Executive policy it is hoped that the development of this type of training may be a key priority in the new ESF programme.

Bespoke training for large employers in the area will continue to be expanded. There are still significant opportunities to develop work with the local authority and the health sector in particular.

Section 6 Medium Term View on Strategic Purpose and Priorities

The following are the main strategic issues that are expected to face the college beyond the 3 year period of this plan.

- ◆ The taught programmes that the college currently has will need to be expanded in a number of locations, see the estates section for full details. It is also our target to ensure that, wherever possible, these assets are owned and not leased.
- ◆ The balance of provision will move towards higher education through UHI and within about 5 years it is expected that this will comprise some 30% of total provision.
- ◆ There is a need to develop a partnership with the private sector in an attempt to address the current issue over the provision of student accommodation on campus. This is an ambitious plan but one which is crucial in the continued development of both Argyll College and other partner colleges/UHI.
- ◆ In about 5 to 7 years time, the college should aim to be delivering between 7,000 and 10,000 FE SUMs. This can only happen if some of the other issues raised in this plan are resolved and if SFC is able to allow growth of this magnitude to take place. There is a resource issue here for SFC but arguably not a major one if looked at in a Scotland wide context. It may be that this scale of future growth may need to be undertaken in a wider geographical context, possibly covering Lochaber and Skye and Lochalsh. Initial discussions have taken place on working with these areas in years to come as part of a future West Highland College.
- ◆ The curriculum will need to be expanded to enable this level of growth to be achieved and delivery of construction, special needs and horticulture skills will be a key element in this.
- ◆ This level of growth will also mean considerable financial growth for the college and in around the same period, the annual turnover should be between £3m and £4m. The economic impact of this growth for the local economy will be considerable and this should assist the funding bids that will be needed if such growth is to be achieved.

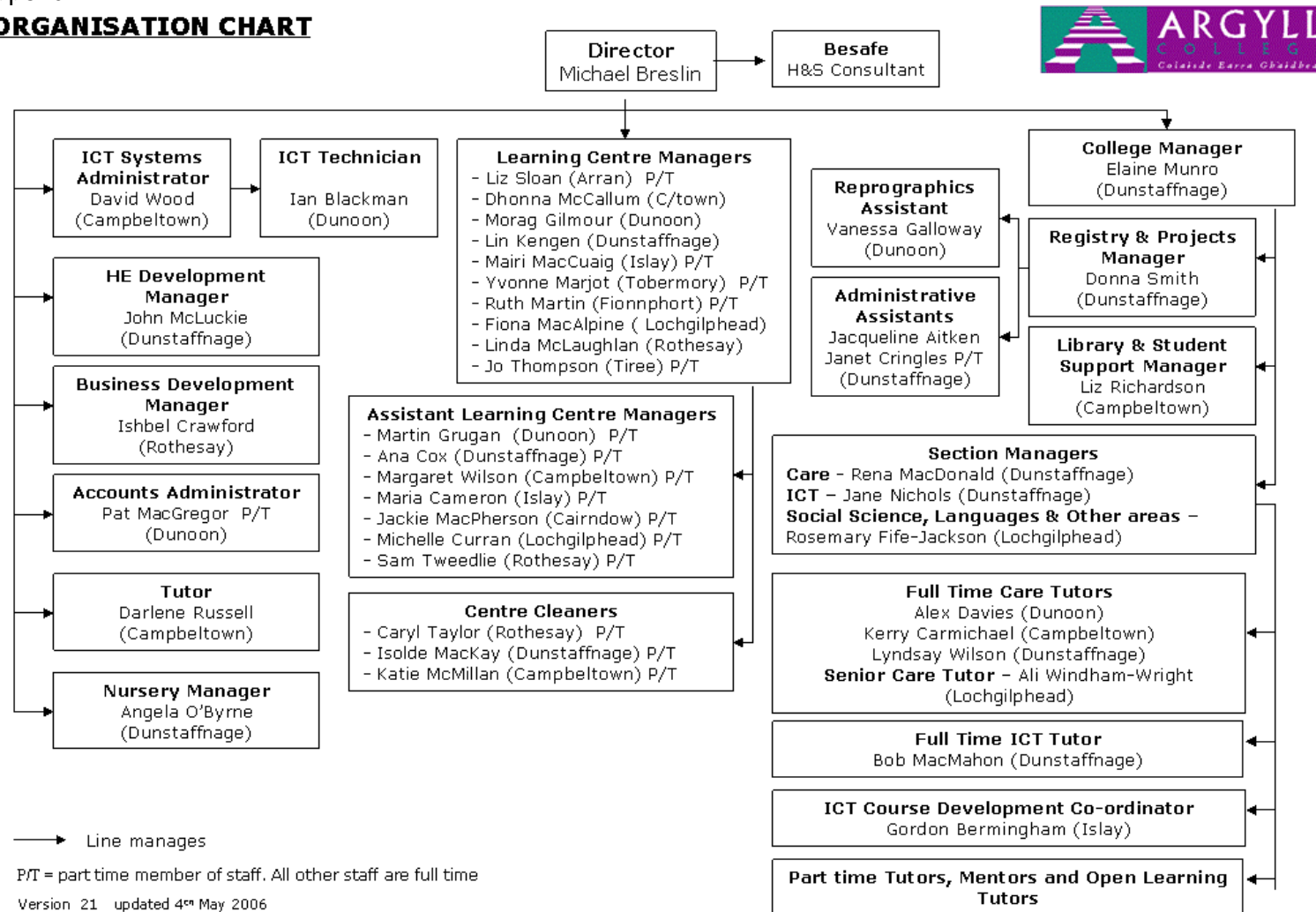
Appendix 4 is a look into the future with some suggestions on what Argyll College will be like in 5 to 10 years from now, ie 2011 to 2016.

In conclusion, there are 2 further documents that will be produced by end August 2006 which relate to this plan but specifically relate to academic year 2006/7. These are:

- ◆ A single page operational plan that sets specific targets and timescales.
- ◆ A budget for 2006/7.

Appendix 1

ORGANISATION CHART



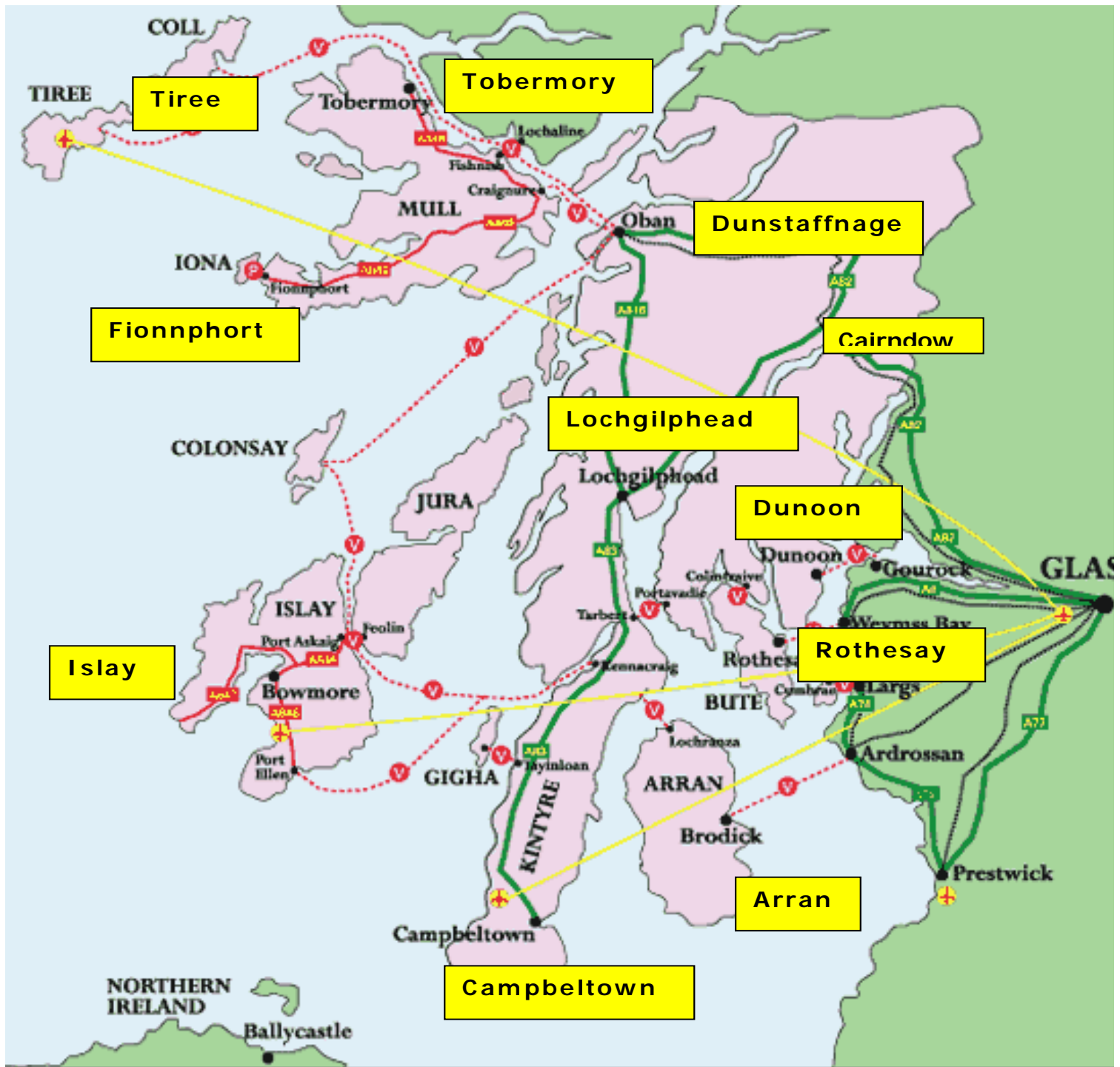
Appendix 2

Population of localities in Argyll and Bute

Source: Voluntary Population Survey 1998/9

Locality	Total population
<i>Dunoon</i>	8,257
<i>Oban</i>	7,803
<i>Campbeltown</i>	5,438
<i>Rothesay</i>	5,128
<i>Lochgilphead</i>	2,100
<i>Ardrishaig</i>	1,353
<i>Port Bannatyne</i>	1,323
<i>Tarbert</i>	1,273
<i>Sandbank</i>	1,211
<i>Innellan</i>	1,049
<i>Tobermory</i>	899
<i>Bowmore</i>	839
<i>Port Ellen</i>	837
<i>Strone</i>	784
<i>Dunbeg</i>	708
<i>Taynuilt</i>	665
<i>North Connel</i>	583
<i>Carradale</i>	582
<i>Inveraray</i>	466

Appendix 3



Appendix 4

A Vision of Argyll College in 2011 to 2016

This appendix is an attempt to look into the future to see what the college will be doing in 5 to 10 years from now. It is not intended to be fanciful, but it is intended to be aspirational. It is also written from the middle of that future period, looking back.

- With the full agreement of the college's former partner, The North Highland College, Argyll College is now part of the West Highland College. This change took place in 2008/9 and was the first new incorporated college in Scotland since colleges left local authority control. WHC covers a huge landmass from Campbeltown and Arran in the south to Skye and the mainland area of Wester Ross. The population of the area covered by the college is approximately 120,000.
- When WHC was formed a new SUMs allocation was agreed by the Scottish Funding Council which provided steady growth over a 5 year period which started in 2008/9. At the end of that period of growth WHC will be delivering 12,500 SUMs and turning over in excess of £7m per annum.
- WHC is now playing a significant role in the University of the Highlands and Islands contributing teaching to a small number of degrees and providing a research capacity in Scottish History in partnership with Mount Stuart Trust in Bute. Higher Education accounts for almost £1.5m of the college turnover.
- The college now has a residential and conference facility in Dunstaffnage in operation; an expanded network of learning centres covering Lochaber and Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross and fully upgraded facilities and equipment throughout what now constitutes a network of 30 learning centres.
- There are 3 sub areas of the college that equate broadly with the areas covered by the enterprise network that covered Argyll, Lochaber and Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross. These sub areas were designed to facilitate local responses to local needs and to deliver specific areas of the curriculum in and for those areas. However, each sub area operates to the same overall quality assurance standards and systems.
- WHC has taken on increasing amounts of commercial training activity and is the key player in the delivery of training and education to the hospitality industry throughout its area of operation.
- The college is a major contributor to the economy of the West Highlands employing some 60 full time and 450 part time staff. The bulk of the college turnover is spent locally and profits re-invested for future areas of expansion.