

THE SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.30 pm on Thursday 5 July 2007 in the North West Building.

Present: Andrew Turner (Chairman), Frederick Allgood, Gwen Blackett, Yvonne Elliott, Wendy Gisborne, Donna Kinnair, Stephenie Linham, Michael Oakes (Principal), Philip Robinson, David Rowlinson,

Apologies: Katie Paffett, Tony Welch, Richard Andrews, Patricia Thompson

In Attendance: John Manterfield, Clerk to the Corporation
Julius Mach, Head of Finance
Rob Roberts, Assistant Principal Quality in the Curriculum
Susan Grantham, Minuting Secretary

The Chairman welcomed members to the new North West Building and advised a tour of the facilities would follow after the meeting. Rob Roberts, Assistant Principal (Quality in the Curriculum) was welcomed for Item 3.

676. Minutes
(Circulated with the agenda)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2007 were AGREED whereupon the Chairman SIGNED the minutes.

677. Presentation by Assistant Principal on Value Added Data

Following his annual quality report to the Standards and Quality Committee in May, Rob Roberts had been requested to make a presentation to the Corporation on Value Added Data. Rob Roberts explained that Value Added was the term used to contextualise the difference between the teaching and learning experience that South Downs College makes to the student. The College uses the ALIS (A Level Information Service) managed by the University of Durham which provides an independent analysis of the performance of A Levels and the views of students taking them. The College is then able to monitor the distance travelled by students and look at the effectiveness of teaching. He noted this system was now being expanded to a Learner Achievement programme, which was a more comprehensive way of looking at value added across the institution. On entry to the College each student's GCSE qualifications (A* - U) are scored 8 – 0 to calculate a 'raw' score, e.g. a student with 12 GCSE subjects scoring 68 points gave a raw score of 5.7. The UCAS (Universities Central Admissions System) scoring system was also noted for A Level – A grade (120 points) to E grade (40) – AS Level would be 60 and 20. Lecturers receive raw score information for each of their students before the start of the course. The College then predicts, using ALIS data on the College, what each student can expect to achieve at A Level. The grades correlations that exists is based on the raw GCSE score. At the end of the programme the College looks to see how each student has performed. Performance below the predicted grade is a negative residual; performance that exceeds the predicted grade is a positive residual and the College can claim that the quality of teaching and learning at South Downs has resulted in the student doing better than expected. All students are given their predicted grade or MAG (minimum acceptable grade) at the start of their course and teachers work with students to make sure that the experience is so good that they will achieve above the predictions. Copies of the presentation slides are attached to the minutes.

[Chart 2.1 - The Departmental Achievement Data - information received from ALIS for 2006 for South Downs compares A2 subject data against the national average – e.g. A2 Music shows an average raw score for the intake at South Downs (5.8) against a national figure (6.5) indicating most students arrived with GCSE qualifications below the norm, and presenting a considerable challenge to staff. A positive residual resulted at the end of the two year course.

Chart 1.1 – shows value added scores for South Downs for all years it has been analysed by ALIS. The line of expectation is shown as O. Anything higher on the graph is better – green area = good, brown area = very good; above that = excellent; off the scale = outstanding.

ALIS Grade Predictions – the graph indicates what grades pupils are likely to obtain in the major A2 Levels, depending on achievement at GCSE as calculated from the ALIS database (2003). The College makes use of this information to inform students of predicted grades at course interview stage to ensure students are enrolled on the right course. Based on South Downs recent value added data, the College would hope that students would achieve a grade higher. The system is also used to inform the effectiveness of teaching; indicating where there is good teaching and where teachers are coasting. Teachers are made aware that the College is not satisfied with students receiving ‘acceptable’ grades.

Attitudes, Resources, Counselling, Aspirations and Extra-Curricular Activities Chart 2.1. The chart indicates the positive outcomes of ALIS data collected from student questionnaires, e.g. ‘I would advise others to come here’ – shows 92% SDC response (national 69%).]

The Principal reminded members that South Downs has a comprehensive intake and the critical factor was the point where students start from. Parents are encouraged to attend parents’ evenings and many students go on to the Russell group of universities. Staff at South Downs include two fully qualified Physics teachers, and Maths teachers from Russell Group universities and currently there were 261 applicants for AS Maths. He also noted the NEETs (not in employment, education or training) figure of 10% in the Havant area. The College wanted a national system of performance analysis to include GNVQ etc.

In response to questions from members, Rob Roberts noted not every subject at SDC has a positive value; students are monitored against predicted grades a total of 5 times with the aim to raise the bar and offer sound practical advice as to how to achieve better. Yvonne Elliott noted the training with staff on Staff Development Days. The Principal outlined equipment provided for students e.g. books, knives, uniforms; and resources including the Learning Resources Centre and computer facilities. A programme of additional support was available to all students. The College receives the same unit of resource as other colleges.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Principal for his informative presentation which was RECEIVED.

678. Search Committee

- (i) Minutes of Meeting held 22 March 2007
(Doc.C07/12 was circulated with the agenda)

The Chairman noted the meeting had recommended the re-appointment of Tony Welch as a business member. This left a vacancy for a member nominated by the Havant Borough Council and the Clerk had written to them and was awaiting their nomination.

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 March 2007 were RECEIVED.

- (ii) Corporation Membership

The Chairman noted the Search Committee had met at 5.15 pm and outlined discussions.

On the recommendation of the Search Committee (5 July 2007) it was AGREED that Stephenie Linham be re-appointed to the Corporation as a co-opted member under Clause 2 (1) (b) of the Instrument and Articles of Government for a period of 4 years from 6 October 2007.

679. Corporation Membership

The Clerk noted terms of office for Gwen Blackett and David Rowlinson were shortly due to expire and both had noted a willingness to stand. On the nomination of Yvonne Elliott seconded by Frederick Allgood it was AGREED that:

- (a) Gwen Blackett be-reappointed as a member nominated within the local community under clause 2 (1) (g) of the Instrument and Articles of Government for period of 2 years until 6 October 2009.
- (b) David Rowlinson be-reappointed as a co-opted member under Clause 2 (1) (b) of the Instrument and Articles of Government for a period of 4 years until 6 October 2011.

680. Vice-Chairman of the Corporation

The Clerk noted that the term of office of Stephenie Linham as Vice Chairman of the Corporation was due to lapse before the next meeting.

On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Wendy Gisborne it was AGREED that Stephenie Linham be re-appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Corporation for a period of 2 years until 6 October 2009.

681. Committee Membership

The Clerk noted the terms of office of members on Corporation Committees, as outlined on the agenda, were shortly due to expire and members had indicated a willingness to continue. On the nomination of Wendy Gisborne seconded by Yvonne Elliott it AGREED that

- (a) Richard Andrews be re-appointed as Chair of the Premises Committee until 14 November 2008.
- (b) Gwen Blackett
 - (i) be re-appointed as a member of the Finance and Employment, Search, Standards and Quality, and Staff Appeals Committee for a period of 2 years until 6 October 2009.
 - (ii) be re-appointed as Chair of Staff Appeals Committee for a period of 2 years until 6 October 2009.
- (c) Stephenie Linham
 - (i) be re-appointed as a member of the Finance and Employment, Staff Appeals, Remuneration and Search Committees until 10 November 2009.
 - (ii) be re-appointed as Chair of Finance and Employment Committee until 10 November 2009.
- (d) David Rowlinson be-reappointed as a member of the Finance and Employment Committee for a period of 2 years until 6 October 2009.
- (e) Patricia Thompson be re-appointed as a member of the Staff Appeals Committee for a period of 2 years until 6 July 2009.
- (f) Andrew Turner be re-appointed as Chair of the Standards and Quality Committee for a period of 2 years until 31 July 2009.
- (g) Tony Welch be re-appointed as a member of the Standards and Quality Committee for a period of 2 years until 31 July 2009.

The Chairman noted that members who wished to be considered for appointment to any of the Corporation's Committees should express an interest to the Clerk.

682. Instrument and Articles of Government – Consultation Process

The Clerk gave an update on the outcome recently advised following the DfES consultation carried out in 2006.

Instrument of Government

- Composition of the Corporation - One significant proposal was to relax membership categories for governors i.e. to have a single 'external' governor category - Accepted;

- The requirement for a minimum of two student governors – Accepted (South Downs Corporation has included two student governors for a good number of years).
- Membership Number – Proposal for the governing body to be reduced from 12 to 10 to provide more flexibility – Not Accepted (South Downs considered that 10 was too low)
- Appointment of Members - To make a consequential amendment to the criteria determining the number of members in each category of membership – Accepted.
- Appointment of Clerk – currently clerks may have a dual role and the proposal was that clerk should only serve in a single capacity – Not Accepted.
- Publication of minutes and papers – Requirement for colleges to place copies of corporation meeting minutes on their websites – Accepted.
- Payment of allowances to members – the remuneration of members, other than for travelling expenses and subsistence costs – Not Accepted.

Articles of Government

- To amend the statement of responsibilities of the corporation to require explicitly the periodic review of the institution's education character and mission – Accepted.
- To amend the statement of responsibilities of the corporation to explicitly require the corporation to approve the institution's quality strategy – Accepted.
- To introduce an article setting out the principal functions of the clerk – Accepted.

Other proposals had not been accepted.

The revised Instrument and Articles would be issued once the Further Education and Training Bill had been accepted by Parliament and was anticipated following the start of the 2007/08 academic year.

The Principal confirmed none of the above caused a moment of concern for the Corporation.

Yvonne Elliott and Wendy Gisborne noted disappointment at this year's student governors' attendance record and the nomination and election process was outlined. The Chairman considered the Corporation had had good student governors in the past but welcomed any suggestions for improvement.

The Chairman noted the Corporation would need to review its own policy of recruitment and invited expressions of interest.

The update was RECEIVED.

683. Academic Board (Doc.C07/13 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal highlighted key issues. He would make a presentation to governors in the next academic year on the important government reform of 14-19 curriculum. Equality and Diversity Committee - One World Week was a particularly successful annual awareness raising event. Staff Development – the government was introducing a new model of Continued Professional Development (CPD) as a national statutory standard for qualifications for teachers. All teachers would need to register annually and carry out a minimum of 30 hours a year CPD. Appendix A to the minutes detailed new and replacement courses at South Downs and it was noted that South Downs was part of the vanguard to ensure that A Level Ancient History was not dropped.

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 May 2007 were AGREED.

684. Premises Committee (Doc.C07/14 was circulated with the agenda)

Stephenie Linham noted the outstanding facilities of the new North West Building. The Committee had discussed possible future accommodation projects for inclusion in the Accommodation Strategy/Strategic Plan. The cleaning contract was considered to be value for money and the recommendation for an extension had subsequently been agreed by the Finance and Employment Committee.

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 May 2007 were AGREED.

685. Standards and Quality Committee
(Doc.C07/15 was circulated with the agenda)

The Chairman reported that Rob Roberts had presented the Quality Review Annual Report which members had found very informative. It was pleasing to note the formal Ofsted inspection of Accounting Business and Professional had re-confirmed the area as outstanding and the internal inspection process had confirmed the curriculum area Information Technology as good and Humanities as outstanding. Members had been very impressed with the brochures for both full-time and part-time courses for September 2007.

Responding to Frederick Allgood the Principal noted that there were some pockets of provision where retention was a problem. 12.5% was recorded over the year, which he considered was quite good. Often low retention was recorded in vocational courses e.g. motor vehicle where students obtained positions at local garages rather than complete their qualification at college which made it appear as if the course was not successful. The College endeavours to ensure students are placed on the right course in order to succeed.

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2007 were RECEIVED.

686. Audit Committee
(Doc.C07/16 was circulated with the agenda)

Donna Kinnair advised that Gill Livingstone of Bentley Jennison had reported the positive outcome of substantial assurance on the two internal audit reports covering College Refectories and Learner Numbers for Business and Community. Bentley Jennison had brought in new auditors with fresh eyes to look at systems and processes. She had confirmed that auditors share good practice but it was frequently good practice identified at South Downs that was shared with other colleges. The Internal Audit Progress report summarised work for the year and South Downs was the only college that they audited that received substantial assurance for all six reports.

Members had also considered the Risk Management Strategy which is a separate item on the Corporation agenda. Many of the risks were deemed to be low risk which indicates that tight controls are in place and assurance can be relied upon.

[Audit minute 277 - Frederick Allgood declared his interest as a Trustee of the Local Government Pension Scheme].

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2007 were RECEIVED.

687. Finance and Employment Committee

(i) Minutes
(Doc.C07/17 was circulated with the agenda)

Stephenie Linham noted the importance of enrolment which reflects on the budget. All other items were covered separately on the Corporation agenda.
The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2007 were RECEIVED.

(ii) Revised Revenue and Capital Budgets 2006/2007
(Doc.C07/18 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal did not anticipate the monitoring as at 21 June would change before the year end of 31 July. He referred members to turnover just over £30 million, paybill of £21 million, in excess of £1 million put to the building project and general equipment; and a surplus of just under £1 million (Page 3). Page 13 detailed the positive cashflow. Page 14 detailed building projects and equipment and the College aimed to end with a zero figure for equipment as the amount allocated each year was spent on the current cohort of students. He was particularly pleased that the North West Building had been paid for a year earlier than anticipated and costs included work continuing over the summer to remove the huts and replace with a new car park, bike and cycle park and landscaping, i.e. a total project of £2.2 million. The tradition of no debt was maintained.

On the proposal of the Chairman it was agreed unanimously to RECEIVE the revised revenue and capital budgets for 2006/2007 and AGREE the probable outturn.

(iii) Revenue and Capital Budgets 2007/2008
(Doc.C07/19 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal noted the front page of the report outlined the assumptions on which figures were based. The Finance and Employment Committee had discussed the number of adult students and there is now no aggregation between 16-18 and 19+. He outlined different government priorities and noted the challenge in terms of the adult market and charging fees. A big issue with adults was also assessment. Robust discussions had taken place with the LSC to ensure a target growth for next year of 270 full-time 16-18 students. Current monitoring of applications indicated the College would exceed this figure.

Key figures were highlighted – (Page 3) Income of £32m which will almost certainly increase over the year, £1.2 million being spent now on equipment, £500,000 on additional IT, £500,000 for buildings i.e. proposed extension to the Courtyard Café and for work to the catering area on the ground floor of the west side of the main building. A surplus of nearly £1 million was estimated at 31 July 2008. Technicians and others would be working hard over this summer to ensure new equipment was in place for the new academic year. Indications were that there would be 5000 full-time students in September 2007 which was significant. Page 10 detailed at a glance the allocations from the LSC including £2 million for additional learning support.

Gwen Blackett and Stephenie Linham noted the assumption of young parents in the Leigh Park area that there were no places available in the Nursery which was a barrier to them joining classes at the College. The Principal noted there were 67 places 0-5 in the Nursery and the College was able to fund nursery places elsewhere for South Downs students and this would need to be made widely known. He also noted that in the new academic year the College would be engaging in a project involved in teenage pregnancy, to be based at the Leigh Park Learning Centre.

On the proposal of the Chairman it was AGREED unanimously that

- (i) the revenue and capital budgets for 2007/2008 be AGREED
- (ii) the Principal be authorised to review and approve any budget forecasts required by the LSC.

688. Risk Management Strategy – Annual Report from College Management
(Doc.C07/20 was circulated with the agenda)

The College Secretary noted the requirement to have a strategy and for the risk management group, which comprised the Principal, College Secretary, Head of Finance and

Head of Information Services, to bring identified risks to the Corporation. Those risks with a higher level score were detailed on the covering page of the report. The highest risk remained 'ensuring continuity and adequacy of funding from the Learning and Skills Council – delays in confirmation of budgets and payments; lack of clarity over funding eligibility; changes of government policy having adverse funding implications' and the action plan to minimise these risks was included.

On the proposal of the Chairman, and on the recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Risk Management Report at appendix A was RECEIVED.

689. Strategic Plan 2007-2010
(Doc.C07/21 was circulated on 27 June 2007)

The Principal invited comments and questions from members on the draft plan which represented the strategic framework. It had been written prior to the DfES being split into DCSF (Department of Children's Services and Families) and DIUS (Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills) and there would be a general election during the lifetime of the plan. There was very little of substance that was different from the previous plan. The College was clear of its mission about inclusivity and excellence for all students and the recognition of an outstanding workforce. Key issues were listed as chapter headings on the contents page - inclusivity and excellence for a comprehensive intake, equality of opportunity, possible future building developments, government priorities for large numbers of adults with poor literacy/numeracy, and the Leitch report. The final copy would be widely circulated to staff, governors and LSC.

The draft Strategic Plan was AGREED.

690. Dates of Meetings for the Next Academic Year
(Doc.C07/22 was circulated with the agenda)

The schedule of meetings for 2007/2008 was RECEIVED and dates for Corporation meetings for 5.30 pm CONFIRMED as:

- Thursday 8 November 2007
- Thursday 6 December 2007
- Thursday 13 March 2008
- Thursday 3 July 2008

Yvonne Elliott offered apologies for the 8 November meeting.

[The meeting was declared closed at 7.45 pm]

sg/100707