

THE SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.30 pm on Thursday 8 November 2007 in the Committee Room

Present: Andrew Turner (Chairman), Frederick Allgood, Richard Andrews, Gwen Blackett, Louise Farn, Wendy Gisborne, Stephenie Linham, Michael Oakes (Principal), Philip Robinson, Yvonne Weeks

Apologies: Yvonne Elliott, David Rowlinson, Patricia Thompson, Tony Welch,

In Attendance: John Manterfield, Clerk to the Corporation
Susan Grantham, Minuting Secretary

The Chairman welcomed Yvonne Weeks and Louise Farn and thanked them for their willingness to serve. He noted meetings were conducted as informally as possible and lasted no more than 2 hours. He extended the Principal's invitation to refreshments afterwards.

691. Minutes (Circulated with the agenda)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2007 were AGREED whereupon the Chairman SIGNED the minutes.

692. Corporation Membership

The Clerk noted that the terms of office of Andrew Turner and Patricia Thompson were shortly due to lapse. On the proposal of Stephenie Linham, seconded by Gwen Blackett, it was unanimously AGREED:

- (a) that Andrew Turner be re-appointed as a business member under Clause 2 (1)(a) of the Instrument of Government for a period of 4 years until 22 November 2011.
- (b) that Patricia Thompson be re-appointed as a business member under Clause 2 (1)(a) of the Instrument of Government for a period of 4 years until 13 November 2011.

Gwen Blackett and others expressed thanks to Andrew Turner for his role as Chairman.

693. Appointment of Student Member

The Clerk noted there were two student member vacancies as outlined on the agenda and that Charlotte Parker-Quaife had now decided to withdraw her candidacy due to her College workload and part-time work commitments. The College was in the process of seeking further nominations for a second student member in readiness for the December meeting. Louise Farn was in her third year at the College, an active member of the Student Union and President this year. Last year she had been the student representative on the Academic Board and part of the Equality and Diversity working party.

On the proposal of the Chairman, the appointment of Louise Farn as student member duly nominated and elected by the students of the College, under Clause 2 (1)(d) of the Instrument of Government, for a period of 2 years (or until such time as she ceases to be a student of the College) was unanimously AGREED.

694. New Appointment – Search Committee 8 November 2007

The Chairman noted that the Search Committee had met at 5.15 pm and was pleased to recommend to the Corporation that Cllr Yvonne Weeks, on the nomination of Havant Borough Council, be appointed to the Corporation. Yvonne is a councillor for Barncroft and

has a long track record of work in the Leigh Park area. The Corporation regarded itself as trustees for the community it serves and was keen to increase participation.

On the proposal of the Chairman, and on the recommendation of the Search Committee 8 November 2007, the appointment of Cllr Yvonne Weeks as a member of the Corporation under Clause (2)(1)(f) of the Instrument of Government – member nominated by a local authority (Havant Borough Council) - for a period of two years with effect from 8 November 2007 was unanimously AGREED.

695. Committee Membership

The Clerk noted a number of committee membership appointments were shortly due to expire as outlined on the agenda and members had expressed a willingness to continue to serve. On the invitation of the Chairman the Principal outlined the roles of the Committees noting that members of the Audit Committee were precluded from being members of the Finance and Employment Committee. The Chairman invited members to declare expressions of interest for becoming members of any of the committees, which met termly, to either himself, the Principal or the Clerk. In respect of the vacancy on the Premises Committee the Clerk noted the Committee were not due to meet again until the summer term (15.05.08).

The following re-appointments were unanimously AGREED:

- (a) Donna Kinnair as member of Audit Committee and Remuneration Committee and Chair of the Audit Committee for a period of 2 years until 10 November 2009
- (b) Patricia Thompson as a member of the Audit Committee for a period of 2 years until 13 November 2009.
- (c) Andrew Turner as Member and Chair of both the Remuneration and the Search Committee for a period of 2 years until 10 November 2009.
- (d) Andrew Turner as member of the Finance and Employment, Standards and Quality Committee, and Staff Appeals Committees for a period of 2 years until 10 November 2009.

[Richard Andrews joined the meeting at 5.45 pm]

696. Search Committee
(Doc.C07/23 was circulated with the agenda)

The Chairman introduced the minutes of the Search Committee held on 5 July 2007 which were duly RECEIVED.

697. Academic Board
(Doc.C07/24 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal noted the Academic Board met termly. He reported significant changes lay ahead in terms of the 14-19 curriculum. The government required institutions to develop a collaborative approach to 14-19 education and the introduction of diplomas and he was chair of the Havant 14-19 Consortium comprising schools, colleges, special schools and private training providers. He proposed making a short presentation to the Corporation meeting in March to inform members of the developments.

The minutes of the Academic Board held on 16 October 2007 were RECEIVED.

698. Premises Committee
(Doc.C07/25 was circulated with the agenda)

Richard Andrews introduced the minutes of the Premises Committee which noted that building projects were well run and summarised all other minor works carried out over the summer holiday period. The College's current cleaning contract had been extended on several occasions and a shortlist of tender firms would be making presentations shortly for a recommendation to be made to the Finance and Employment Committee on 22 November.

The minutes of the Premises Committee held on 18 October 2007 were RECEIVED.

699. Ofsted Inspection 2 and 3 October 2007 and LSC Provider Financial Assurance Review of Financial Management and Governance 4 October 2007

The Principal had received the draft from Ofsted on 19 October and the report was scheduled to be published on 15/16 November. Governors would receive a copy and he would comment further on the report in the December meeting. The College would also be publishing its own summary of the inspection report. He referred members to the letter he had written to staff (5.10.07) and copied to the Corporation which detailed the outstanding outcomes reported by inspectors. Inspectors had reported very positively on governance.

Two points had been raised - Inspectors praised the excellent enrichment programme but commented on the poor take-up by students for 2006-07. Louise Farn noted that students were very keen to participate in enrichment but often had difficulty fitting sessions into their timetables. Inspectors had also suggested that some thought be given to work-based apprenticeship schemes.

The Principal noted the College was one of the first colleges to receive a 'lighter-touch' Ofsted inspection following its previous outstanding Ofsted Inspection in 2004. All colleges are inspected on 5 key questions from the Common Inspection Framework based on the principles of Every Student Matters. Inspectors had carried out lesson observations and the Principal outlined the role of the College's team of Senior Lecturer Teaching Mentors and he would be carrying out internal interviews for another cohort of excellent teaching practitioners in December. All candidates would be making short teaching presentations to a panel of three staff and two students. It was important to gain the views of students and this was the format for all lecturer interviews.

Yvonne Weeks noted with interest the proposal to take forward work-based apprenticeships which could benefit many young people in the community

The update was RECEIVED.

700. Monitoring of College's Statutory Duty (Education Act 2002) to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people under 18
(Doc.C07/26 was circulated with the agenda)

The College Secretary noted the Corporation was required to demonstrate compliance of its duty of care under The Education Act 2002 and also to review arrangements annually. Some 1100 teaching and support staff had received training as at 29 October with further sessions in place for Staff Development Day on 7 December. 'Staying Safe and Secure at College' was included in the Student Handbook and Diary. Staff discuss such issues with students in order for students to respect each other and staff to respect students and in this way any issues regarding bullying may be dealt with. There are two College nurses who, as well as administering first-aid and being a first point of contact for students who are unwell, go into lessons to give advice and guidance on health issues. The College holds an annual Health Fair and these arrangements fit in with the Every Student Matters agenda. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Enhanced Disclosure is carried out for all staff appointments and the disclosures are reviewed on a three year rolling programme.

Philip Robinson questioned whether CRB disclosures should be carried out on governors. The College Secretary advised this was a matter for governors to decide although not a requirement as governors do not have unaccompanied contact with students. The Ofsted inspectors had specifically checked compliance with government guidelines during the recent inspection. Many governors were already subject to disclosures because of the nature of their work. Freddie Allgood considered that it would be prudent to carry out disclosures and members agreed for the Clerk to progress arrangements. Freddie Allgood noted the reference to Hampshire Social Services should be amended to read Hampshire Children's Services.

The report was RECEIVED.

701. Principal's Annual Report 2006-2007
(Doc.C07/27 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal noted his gratitude to Andrew Turner for his chairmanship of the Corporation which was a great strength as was the Committee Structure and the involvement of all governors who give freely of their time.

Philip Robinson referred to the timeliness of the report and whether it would be more appropriate for the Standards and Quality Committee to have detailed discussions on issues of retention and achievement prior to the report being presented to the Corporation. The Principal advised the cycle of business would be reviewed for the following year.

The Principal highlighted retention and achievement (Page 2). The definition of the levels of grades were noted to be Adult basic skills designated level 1; GCSE equivalent level 2 grades A-C, A Level or equivalent level 3, higher education or equivalent levels 4/5. Members were referred to A Level and BTEC, long courses level 3 16-18 and College figures 2005-07 compared with the latest published national average figures for 2006, representing some 390 colleges. These showed the College usually well ahead of national benchmarks – SDC retention 86% up to 87% against a national average of 82%; achievement 92% up to 94% against a national average of 86%. The formula for success rates was retention x achievement, e.g. if 20 start in the class and ten leave and the remaining ten all achieve the success rate is reduced to 50%. The Principal meets individually with all Heads of Curriculum and scrutinises this data annually. The Standards and Quality Committee would be looking at the examination data in detail and the graph for improvement.

Yvonne Weeks considered the College looked terrific and for many offered second chance education. She had been much impressed by student attitude to learning during her tour in September when students had been in College for only a fortnight.

The Principal emphasised the open access nature of the College with courses offered at all levels. Some 2000 out of 5000 full-time students were in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance which gave an indication of the nature of the intake. Responding to Philip Robinson he advised that teachers held individual profiles on every student taken from the screening of literacy and numeracy on entry. For the first time this year A Level Ancient History had been offered and places taken up by 60 very able students. 1400 of the 5000 full-time students were studying A Levels. 800 students travelled to College from Portsmouth. The College had a generous travel scheme and also provided vocational students with essential equipment, e.g. catering and hairdressing students

The Principal was particularly pleased at the number of students who had progressed to higher education (673) and he noted the Colleges pastoral support system to encourage progression. Many students choose to remain at South Downs to study Higher National Diplomas. Local universities are popular, mainly since the introduction of fees, and the top destinations listed on Page 5 showed Portsmouth the most popular.

Page 7 detailed student enrolment based on the 1 October census and two trends - the significant rise in full-time students (increased by 1000 from 2002 to 2007); and the sharp decline in part-time enrolments (from 10,226 in 2002 to 5912 in 2007). Adults were enrolling on longer courses but there were fewer enrolments. This was due to government priorities and the withdrawal of recreational courses (e.g pilates, yoga, languages for holidays) which had been replaced with courses with examinations. The Principal's main concern for the future was for adult education as detailed on Page 9, and the balance in terms of what can be offered to 19+ students. He had some sympathy with the government view that public money should be spent on training adults in literacy, numeracy and IT skills, and was concerned about the balance which allows for the artistic and spiritual. To demonstrate the significant change in government priorities he read from the then Secretary of State for Education's foreword from the 1998 document *'The Learning Age'* which outlined priorities of lifelong learning and widening participation. Now enormous swathes of society were excluded due to the introduction of fees instructed by the government. Students on benefits paid nothing many could no longer afford courses for self-improvement and post-19 education would become problematic in the future.

Building projects 1990 – 2007 were listed on page 8 and the College remained debt-free without any borrowing. College News and the Principal's letters to staff were included in the appendices.

Philip Robinson congratulated the Principal and his senior management team on the report which was RECEIVED.

702. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was CONFIRMED for 5.30 pm on Thursday 6 December 2007.

[The meeting was declared closed at 7.00 pm]

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