

## THE SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.30 pm on Thursday 9 November 2006 in the Committee Room.

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

Apologies: Tony Welch

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

The Chairman welcomed Katie Paffett, whose appointment as student governor was item 4 on the agenda, and outlined the format of the meetings.

### 643. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2006 were AGREED whereupon the Chairman SIGNED the minutes.

### 644. Corporation Membership

The Clerk noted that a number of appointments were shortly due to expire as detailed on the agenda and members had indicated a willingness to serve for a further term.

On the proposal of the Chairman the following re-appointments were AGREED unanimously:

- (a) Richard Andrews as a business member under clause (2)(1)(a) of the Instrument and Articles of Government for a period of 4 years with effect from 14 November 2006.
- (b) Yvonne Elliott as a staff member (who has been duly nominated and elected by the staff of the College) under Clause (2)(1)(c) of the Instrument and Articles of Government for a period of 4 years with effect from 14 November 2006.
- (c) Tony Welch as a local authority member under Clause (2)(1)(f) of the Instrument and Articles of Government (member nominated by Havant Borough Council) for a period of 2 years with effect from 15 December 2006.

The CHAIRMAN noted there remained two vacancies on the Corporation, one business and one co-opted, and the College had not been successful in its recruitment advertising. Regrettably, the Clerk's recent discussions with an MD of a local firm had not resulted in an expression of interest. The Corporation had focussed to attract members to reflect curriculum areas and proposals to the Clerk and Principal were invited.

### 645. Appointment of Student Members

The Clerk noted that two students - Katie Paffett (A2 student in Business Studies, Economics, Maths) and Sophie Green (Year 2 student BTEC National Certificate in Travel and Tourism) had been duly nominated and elected by the students of the College. On the proposal of the Chairman the appointment of two student members duly nominated and elected by the students of the College, under Clause (2)(1)(d) of the Instrument and Articles of Government, for a period of 2 years (or until such time as they cease to be students of the College) was AGREED unanimously.

646. Committee Membership

The Clerk noted a number of committee membership appointments were shortly due to expire and members had expressed a willingness to continue to serve. There was also one vacancy on the Premises Committee.

On the proposal of the Chairman the following re-appointments were AGREED unanimously:

- (a) Finance and Employment Committee  
Tony Welch for a period of two years until 5 December 2008.
- (b) Premises Committee  
Richard Andrews for a period of two years until 14 November 2008; and  
Wendy Gisborne for a period of two years until 6 December 2008.
- (c) Standards and Quality  
Yvonne Elliott for a period of two years until 14 November 2008; and  
Philip Robinson for a period of two years until 31 December 2008.
- (d) Search Committee  
Wendy Gisborne for a period of two years until 14 November 2008.

[Stephenie Linham joined the meeting at 5.40 pm]

The College Secretary noted that historically a student member had been appointed to the Premises Committee and on the proposal of Wendy Gisborne seconded by Patricia Thompson it was AGREED unanimously that Katie Paffett be appointed to the Premises Committee until 12 July 2007.

647. Academic Board

(Doc.C06/29 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal noted he had been in London attending a meeting with David Bell, Permanent Secretary DfES and the College Secretary had chaired the Academic Board in his absence. The Principal noted 14-19 developments locally towards the introduction of specialised diplomas. He commended the work of the Equality and Diversity Committee, and the Staff Development Committee, chaired effectively by the College Secretary, spent nearly £500,000 annually on staff training.

Responding to Gwen Blackett, the Principal advised that the College was not able to take as many as would like to come, but some 300 14-16 year olds from local schools attended on vocational courses for half a day, once a week, e.g. Staunton Park for motor vehicle.

Stephenie Linham noted that governors had previously been offered the opportunity to attend staff development sessions and the Clerk agreed to send details of scheduled training.

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2006 were RECEIVED.

648. Premises Committee

(Doc.C06/30 was circulated with the agenda)

Stephenie Linham introduced the minutes and noted the new North West Building was broadly on schedule with the roof due to be in place by Christmas and completion in May in time for examinations use. The Committee had been very interested in the Premises Data which detailed value for money and noted space was used to full capacity. Benchmarking showed that more money was spent by South Downs on cleaning but this was carried out twice daily due to the intensity of use.

Responding to Patricia Thompson the College Secretary confirmed the first LSC capital support claim on the new building had been on schedule. The archaeological survey had found some features of medieval date or earlier.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2006 were RECEIVED.

649. Monitoring of College's Statutory Duty (Education Act 2002), to safeguard and promote welfare of young people under 18  
(Doc.C06/30 was circulated with the agenda)

The College Secretary noted the statutory duty of the Corporation under the Education Act 2002 to monitor the College's findings with regard to the safeguarding and promoting of the welfare of young people under the age of 18. The report highlighted the policies and procedures in place including the College's policy in relation to bullying, although not prevalent at South Downs, and the employment of two College nurses for dealing with students who are ill. Already this year the nurses had seen some 1300 students. Procedures for interviewing and appointing all staff were of critical importance and any gaps in employment history were fully explored at interview and references taken up. On-line checks were made against the Department of Health Protection of Children Act List database and this included the DfES List 99 of persons barred from working with or having access to children. During the year the College had spent over £20,000 for all existing staff to be CRB checked in anticipation of revised DfES guidance and in the last week a letter had been received from the DfES asking for all staff to be checked by the end of November.

In response to Frederick Allgood the College Secretary noted that if governors are not in unsupervised contact with young people they are not required to be CRB checked.

Stephenie Linham referred to the Spring Corporation meeting which had focussed on the five outcomes of the government initiative Every Student Matters. The College Secretary updated members on the work on healthy living and lifestyles promoting exercise and healthy eating choices. Staff development day on 1 December was being dedicated to training sessions on Every Student Matters for teaching and support staff. The Principal advised much work had been progressed and Lucy Manning, the newly appointed Head of Student Services, would make a brief presentation on Every Student Matters at the December Corporation meeting.

In response to queries raised by Philip Robinson and Gwen Blackett, the College Secretary noted that students sign an agreement in relation to the processing of data and that the College is registered with the Data Protection Registrar for capturing of images on CCTV cameras around the College. The Principal noted there was no ban against mobile phones or their use to take photos and such a policy would be difficult to police.

The report was RECEIVED.

650. Principal's Annual Report 2005-2006  
(Doc.C06/32 was circulated with the Agenda)

The Principal commended the terrific staff at South Downs, some 1300 full and part-time, and his desire to give them the best conditions of employment, and payment (5.5% pay increase recently), to which they respond superbly with a real determination to support students which makes for a very strong institution. The ethos of inclusivity and excellence runs right through the institution which is one of the largest and most successful Colleges in England. The College has no staff vacancies and receives applications from schools and 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges. He further commended his Senior Management Team and the support of governors who understand further education and the funding methodology and are 'signed-up' to the ethos of the College. Ofsted continues to grade South Downs 'outstanding' which is checked each year by the Annual Assessment Visit, and in July the College was awarded Beacon status by the government which is conveyed only to a handful of outstanding

colleges. The College goes from strength to strength each year, growing and improving results. Retention and achievement statistics were a clear indicator of success and he referred members to the table on page 2. In particular, level 3 (A Level and equivalent) with 5126 starters for 2005-6 and comparisons with the national average - which were always one year behind – SDC retention 86% (nationally 81%); and achievement 92% (nationally 84%). The chart indicated significant increases with some areas to improve e.g. retention of lower level basic skills. On the basis of inclusivity the College had several hundred students who are illiterate and innumerate and the Leigh Park Learning Centre responds to people in their own community who may find attending the College campus too daunting an experience.

The Standards and Quality Meeting (13 November) would look in detail at examination results, appendix A, presented in the same format as the Principal receives for each curriculum area - starters, retention, achievement, success rate and the percentage of high grades. For the second year running A Level results achieved a 99% pass rate. Staff were currently engaged in the formal self-assessment process with all 14 Heads of Curriculum who have individual meetings with the Principal to discuss their self-assessment reports. Yvonne Elliott, Curriculum Head of Sport and Public Services, leads the largest curriculum area which remains graded 'outstanding'. Heads of Additional Learning Support and Key Skills have a similar meeting. The process was central to the College's quality cycle and gives the Principal a tremendous knowledge of the large and diverse College. From these meetings curriculum heads and staff will address weaknesses and determine Operational Targets for the next calendar year.

Responding to David Rowlinson the Principal outlined internal systems for measuring success against other colleges. All students are screened on enrolment for literacy and numeracy and he outlined the Minimal Acceptable Grades System (MAGS) for profiling each student to determine the distance travelled. Gwen Blackett noted concerns nationally in respect of Science subjects and recruiting qualified teachers. The Principal reported that the College had 2 groups each of A Level Physics and Chemistry taught by qualified teachers. He noted the cyclical problem of attracting qualified teachers to schools to teach Science to GCSE standard and the effect this was having on pupils and recruiting graduates to teach sciences. Frederick Allgood noted the very good results for A Level Law and high percentage of A and B grades. The Principal agreed that there was a direct relationship between successful teachers and results. He outlined the role of Senior Lecturer Teaching Mentors, superb classroom practitioners recruited internally to observe and support teaching staff. The College student-centred approach was evident during all teaching staff interviews which contain a mock lesson to a panel which includes students and their views.

The chairman asked how could governors best measure the relative success of students from the GCSE profile they arrive with. Yvonne Elliott referred to ALIS (A Level Information System) information which plotted a negative and positive residual so that the College was able to measure standard deviations. The Principal advised he would ask Rob Roberts, Assistant Principal – Quality, to table statistics to show 'distance travelled' to the Standards and Quality Committee on 13 November.

The Principal reported on enrolment figures in his report noting that the 14-16 figure of 293 referred to school vocational part-time enrolments discussed earlier. Full-time figures had increased year on year whilst part-time numbers decreased and he reminded members that in October 2003 many recreational courses were then funded by the government. The College also had many College Certificate courses but now only courses with external qualifications were government funded. More students were taking basic skills, numeracy and literacy.

Page 4 updated the list of building projects since 1990. There was no borrowing so robust solvency was maintained.

Referring to Priorities, the Principal had no difficulty with the concept that those adults who can afford to do so should pay for their courses. He was however concerned that those just above benefit level who have to pay fees and government targets gave the College little room for local decision-making. He was a great believer in lifelong learning and was concerned that some will not engage in learning. The increase in fees that had been imposed by the government had not had an impact on enrolment. In response to Patricia Thompson, it was noted learner support funds are limited and adults may make application, and for full Level 2 qualifications adults do not pay fees. The other main priority was 14-19 and the importance of progress towards specialised diplomas for 2013.

Stephenie Linham enquired whether the Education Maintenance Grant (EMA) had any impact on encouraging students to stay. The Principal noted that some 1800 full-time students received the means-tested grant, £10, £20 or £30 per week based on parental income, and there was no doubt that it had had an impact. Katie Paffett agreed that student colleagues made an effort to attend to receive the EMA. The College supports students by paying for all books and essential equipment, e.g. catering knives, hairdressing brushes.

Responding to David Rowlinson the Principal noted that 2013 was the date for the 14-19 entitlement curriculum and every student will have the entitlement to take one of the 14 vocational lines whether this be at school/college or a mixture of the two. Colleges and schools were required to bid together in a consortium and the earliest date for the Havant Consortium would be 2009 depending on the involvement of schools.

Frederick Allgood enquired whether, with China an emerging economy of the world, there was any demand for offering Chinese as a language. The Principal noted the College used to run minority languages but recently there had been little demand.

The Chairman thanked the Principal and on his proposal the Principal's Annual Report to the Corporation was RECEIVED.

651. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was CONFIRMED for 5.30 pm on Thursday 7 December 2006.

[The meeting was declared closed at 7.00 pm]

Sg/15.11.06