

THE SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.45 pm on Thursday 12 November 2009 in the Committee Room

Present: Andrew Turner (Chairman), Frederick Allgood, Gwen Blackett, Joshua Bulleyment, Yvonne Elliott, Donna Munday, Laxmi Neave, Michael Oakes (Principal), Patricia Thompson, Madeleine Wade; Tony Welch

Apologies: Stephenie Linham

In Attendance: Minutes 789-791: Chris Harpum, Head of Faculty – Arts and Sciences
Liz Norland, Head of Faculty – Business and Community
Peter Mudd, Head of Information Services
John Manterfield, Clerk to the Corporation
Susan Grantham, Minuting Secretary

The Chairman welcomed Madeleine Wade - A2 student studying French, History, Philosophy and English; and outlined the format of meetings.

He also welcomed for item 4 - Liz Norland - Head of Faculty, Business and Community; Chris Harpum - Head of Faculty Arts and Sciences; and Peter Mudd, Head of Information Services

He thanked members for attending and noted this was the first Corporation meeting to take place under the new format and hoped all members would contribute to discussions.

789. Minutes
(circulated with the agenda)

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9 July 2009 were AGREED whereupon the Chairman SIGNED the minutes with the following amendment under Minute 782 – Academic Board – Ed Balls’ title be amended by the deletion of the words ‘for Education’.

790. Appointment of Student Member

The Clerk noted Madeleine Wade (A2 student - French, History, Philosophy and English) had been nominated as a student member by the students of the College.

On the proposal of the Chairman the appointment of Madeleine Wade as student member duly nominated and elected by the students of the College, under Clause 2(1)(f) 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.

791. Examination Results

(Doc.C09/24 was circulated with the agenda); South Downs College booklet on A Level Success 2009 was laid around the table (Doc C09/24(a))

The Principal advised his report covered all full-time and part-time courses for the fifteen curriculum areas across the two Faculties. It was presented in the same format that heads of curriculum present data as part of the self-assessment procedure. He had asked the two Heads of Faculty to make presentations and outline any particular strengths and weaknesses and focus on improvements being made. Peter Mudd, Head of Information Services, was in attendance to answer any data-related queries.

Chris Harpum introduced himself as the newly appointed Head of Arts and Sciences and noted he was previously Head of Curriculum – Humanities with a strong A Level background.

Copies of the two presentations, by curriculum area, are attached to the minutes and highlight particular achievements (black print) and areas of concern (red print) which are being focussed on for improvement. The following aspects were highlighted for members -

A Levels - 99.6% pass rate (national 97.50% - includes private colleges, 6th forms etc.)
48.30% achieved high grades A – B

At least 10 students achieved 3 or more A grades at A Level

Success with students who return to study e.g. Scott Carless studying classics at Balliol

AS Level national 'dip' in results

89.49% pass rate (national 88.10%)

31.6% achieved high grades A – B compared with 36% in 2008

79% progressing to A2 (fall of 3% from 2008)

Languages and Humanities – 1500 learners studying A Levels

South Downs established as Centre of Excellence for the Classics; Ancient History introduced two years ago – 36 entries, pass rate 100% (66% high grades). Weakness AS French results.

Hair, Beauty and Holistic Therapies - weakness Introduction to Hairdressing (part-time evening class) induction has been extended over two days.

The Performing Arts – Centre of Excellence for Dance; National dip in AS Drama and Theatre Studies – lobbying to improve grades and ascertain what went wrong

Science and Maths - weakness AS physics (92% retention; 87% achievement; 79% success) staff being monitored and receiving extra training – Chemistry doing well (93% retention; 100% achievement, 93% success) and colleagues sharing best practice with Physics staff.

Catering and Hospitality - weakness Preparation for Work in Travel and Tourism – greater focus on initial assessment; progression course now available

Art Design and Media – weakness BTEC 1st Diploma in Media – introduced new course manager and teamed with 'buddy' to get helpful experience.

Engineering – weakness Level 2 NVQ Performing Ops – introduced new scheme of work, giving students additional support inside of class to meet student individual needs, introducing banding assessments.

In response to questions from members it was noted:

- all students are screened for literacy and numeracy at interview; more emphasis is being made on improving skills of interviewers to make students aware of all the courses available. Students come in from school with a range of qualifications and interviewers need to ensure they are placed on the right level of course.
- students receive extra tuition with regular revision classes, those with particular needs get additional support and full-time students have individual learning programmes. College is particularly good at helping poor achieving students.
- early identification of likely disappointing results – staff aim to pick up by constant process of monitoring and assessment; dealing with issues of attendance and lateness; 3rd interview process 4-5 weeks into the term; individual learning plans; opportunities to intervene after A Level modules taken. Faculty heads weekly meetings with course managers and curriculum heads and curriculum heads with course managers; back-up through tutorial system.
- Yvonne Elliott noted it was easier to track and monitor students on a vocational as students are tracked and monitored all along. Trends are more worrying.

In response to the Chairman, Chris Harpum outlined action taken in respect of the disappointing A2 Physics results. This included physics teachers working closely with chemistry teachers to share best practice.

The Principal reminded members that success rates are based on retention x achievement – if only 10 in a class of 20 remain and get 100% achievement, the success rate is only 50%. The success rate is the important figure for South Downs.

Liz Norland noted the Faculty of Business and Community covered 8 curriculum areas, two of which are cross college - additional support; skills development (previously key skills).

Accounting Business and Professional – weakness retention on part-time AS Business Studies – students enrol full of enthusiasm but not fully prepared for amount of work required – in future will have particular course induction; pre-course basic skills screening , additional support. Members were advised that ALIS records value added based on student profiles – looking at the grade students come to college with, and their predicted grade compared with the eventual grade to give a base grade/positive score/negative score – anything above base rate is positive and +0.6 is significant (e.g. A2 Law)

Information and Communication Technology - Weakness 79% achievement of AS ICT; example given of how AS Computing improved and plans for ICT – new course manager, reorganised scheme of work, online ILPs, records of work, close links with exam board, regular course team meetings

Sport and Public Services – weakness VCTC Diploma in Sports Massage Therapy – examples of ingredients for success given on page 5 for A2 Sport. (CPG =current profile grade); parents contacted to enlist support to encourage students to attend.

Health and Care – weakness achievement 79% on BTEC 1st Diploma Health and Social Care

Skills for Life – area predominantly covers 19+ literary, numeracy and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Focussing on some ESOL single units.

Foundations for Learning (LDD) 125 full-time students from special schools with a range of learning disabilities/difficulties. Students mostly on entry courses, some on part-time mainly community-based. Weakness to raise retention on 3 full-time courses with plans in place to improve.

Skills Development (formerly Key Skills which are changing to Functional Skills) – weakness 57% achievement Key Skills Communication Level 2.

Additional Support – large number of students with physical difficulties and a range of learning difficulties. Showing a slight dip in retention and achievement for students with identified LDD. Wonderful team of specialised staff looking after students with a diversity of difficulties/disabilities.

Liz Norland closed her presentation with student quotes -

‘You tolerated me regardless of my ADHD, and you didn’t shut me out or alienate me, you treated me as an equal and for that I would like to say thank you. Thank you for being an amazing teacher, thank you for making the course worthwhile and, most importantly, thank you for not judging a book by its cover. ‘

In response to the Chairman, the Principal noted that the quality process was a separate agenda item. The two Heads of Faculty and Quality Manager are part of his new Curriculum Quality Leadership Team and it was his intention to introduce other team members, including Richard Barlow Quality Manager, at the March meeting when the SAR will be presented to the Corporation.

[Donna Munday joined the meeting at 6.30 pm.]

Responding to Gwen Blackett on facilities for students where the home environment is not conducive to study, Liz Norland advised that students with special needs are able to make use of the Learning Resources Centre and Study Centre for quiet work and also fit into sessions in small groups with teaching staff. All students are supported and encouraged to progress whatever their level of ability on entry. The Principal noted the comprehensive nature of South Downs which has the largest number of students

with learning difficulties/disabilities in Hampshire and these students are as important as any other students and part of the College community.

The Chairman thanked the Principal for his Examination Report (Doc.C09/24) which was RECEIVED. He also thanked Chris Harpum, Liz Norland (and Peter Mudd) for their presentations and explanations which were RECEIVED.

[Chris Harpum, Liz Norland and Peter Mudd left the meeting at 6.35 pm.]

The Chairman noted that members of the former Standards and Quality Committee are used to drilling down into further detail in respect of examination results. Patricia Thompson considered governors need time to become more experienced in this respect. The Principal added that there would be an opportunity to look through the Self Assessment Report (SAR) in more detail at the March meeting. It was important that all governors now have the opportunity of seeing the core business of the College and know about the quality of provision as well as the finances.

Yvonne Elliott advised that course managers are becoming more experienced at using data, looking at action plans and student course reviews. The whole ethos is based on student feedback and what works well for them.

The Principal considered it was important to contextualise the scale of the operation. The College is as open access as possible with over 5000 students and the entry qualification to study A Levels is 5 GCSEs A-C. Schools are putting pupils in for a range of qualifications, and it is important for students to be placed on courses where they can realistically achieve.

792. Search Committee and Membership
(Doc.C09/25 was laid around the table)

The Clerk noted that the Search Committee met on Monday 9 November 2009 to consider the two vacancies. One as the result of Philip Robinson's resignation at the end of September, and the vacancy since June 2008 following the resignation of Cllr Weeks, and the suggested nomination from Havant Borough Council for Cllr Tarrant had been declined by Cllr Tarrant. The Committee discussed whether the Corporation should be recommended to seek a nomination from Havant Borough Council or to reduce the total number of members. The Committee had noted the Corporation had a Havant Borough Council member, Cllr Gwen Blackett, a former member Tony Welch, and a local government representative Cllr Freddie Allgood, a Hampshire County Council member. Therefore it was felt that membership could be re-determined. Members also looked at the balance of skills and experience and considered that sufficient already existed on the proviso that the Corporation should seek a member with experience in higher education to replace Phillip Robinson. The Clerk had accordingly approached Chichester University and today heard that the Vice Chancellor, Dr Robin Baker, did not feel able to take on the role himself. However, he would like the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Clive Behagg, to take the role but he was currently abroad and not contactable but hoped to be able to get back to us at the end of November.

The Clerk advised members that Philip Robinson had taken up a degree course in local History at Oxford and the course meetings fall on a Thursday evening. Members considered it would be good to have a member from Chichester as so many of our students progress to that university and it was good news to hear back so promptly.

On the proposal of the Chairman, it was unanimously AGREED

- (i) That the resignation of Philip Robinson with effect from 29 September 2009 and the two vacancies on the Corporation be NOTED.

- (ii) That the minutes of the Search Committee held on 9 November 2009 be RECEIVED.
- (iii) That the Search Committee's recommendations (9 November 2009) be ENDORSED, namely that
 - (a) The Clerk should approach the Vice Chancellor of the University of Chichester to ascertain whether he or a senior colleague would be willing to serve on the Corporation, and if so to arrange for a visit to the College
 - (b) In the event that the approach to the University of Chichester was unsuccessful, the Clerk should approach the University of Southampton in like terms
- (iv) That the skills and experience of the existing membership were such that it was not necessary to seek a member from Havant Borough Council and that accordingly, the total number of members be re-determined at 14 by reducing by one the number of members under Clause 2 (1) (a) of the Instrument of Government.

793. Academic Board
(Doc.C09/26 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal noted the important work of the two committees, Staff Development, and Equality and Diversity, and the reports from Faculties on new course provision. He offered to take any questions.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2009 were RECEIVED.

794. Curriculum Quality Assurance
(Doc.C09/27 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal referred to his report in which he clearly states his responsibility for the leadership of quality provision. He highlighted the sentence 'Satisfactory is simply not a professional option for staff at South Downs and good must always been seen as but a staging post to outstanding.' There had been some staff changes, including the retirement of Assistant Principal Rob Roberts and he wanted to widen the group looking at curriculum quality assurance. Accordingly he has established the Curriculum Quality Leadership Team comprising the newly appointed Quality Manager, Richard Barlow, the two Heads of Faculty, and three members with knowledge and interest in the vocational areas – Rebecca Cutler, Head of Curriculum - Foundations for Learning (LDD); Lorraine Bettsworth, newly appointed Head of Curriculum of Hair, Beauty and Holistic Therapies; and Ann Gorecki - formerly the Centre of Vocational Excellence in Health and Care Manager, and senior lecturer in teaching. He had introduced a series of quality groups – the curriculum quality review group, and groups for AS and A Levels; vocational provision; higher education; and foundation learning (everything below GCSE). In addition the Support Services Quality Review Group covers all functions in the College as part of the totality of supporting learners.

All 15 curriculum areas prepare individual Self Assessment Reports (SARs) which are presented to a panel and graded; the Principal assesses the final grade at an individual meeting with each Head of Curriculum. The SARs state strengths and weaknesses and in addition 3-5 annual Operational Targets are set by every Head of Curriculum together with staff based on the SAR, including one for ILT (Information Learning Technology) and one employer-related target. Heads of Curriculum present targets to the Senior Management Team and Wider Management Group annually in December and review achievement of targets with the same group in June. Similarly, lead managers for cross-college targets, including teaching and learning; equality and diversity; staff development; resources and support, set and review targets.

Each year the College arranges a series of internal inspections involving external consultants and these trained Ofsted inspectors report back to the Principal. There is a strong mentoring team, recently strengthened with four new appointments. Students were part of the appointment panel, and are involved in all lecturer appointments to assess the presentation of a micro lesson. From 38 applications, 15 candidates were interviewed over two days with 2 students on each panel.

The good teaching and learning guide informs good teaching and learning.

The College aims to provide each student with an outstanding learning experience. He noted Ofsted will only give a couple of week's notice for future inspections.

Gwen Blackett considered the smaller groupings for review meetings were important and encouraged people to speak and ask questions.

On the proposal of the Chairman, the Principal's report on curriculum quality assurance was RECEIVED and the quality strategy, including the new curriculum quality leadership team, was ENDORSED by the Corporation.

795. Building and Accommodation Update
(Doc.C09/28 was circulated with the agenda)

The College Secretary updated members on the position last reported to the Premises Committee (14.05.09) and the Finance and Employment Committee (25.06.09).

North West Building 2. The building was completed on time for the start of full-time classes in September and had been well received by both staff and students. Expenditure to date including equipment had amounted to £2,026,094 and the final account was being prepared. The contract was expected to be £1.9 million with total project costs not exceeding £2.2 million.

Studio Café – Work on refurbishment of the Art Studio to create the Studio Café and external seating area began in July 2009 and the Café was handed over by the contractor Cummins & Pope on 9 September ready for the start of term. Expenditure to date has totalled £143,618. Some £35,000 remains to be paid to the main contractor and the final account has not yet been agreed – a small retention sum remains payable in September 2010. Total project costs should be some £200,000. The facility has been extremely well received by the Refectories Manager, her staff and students and over 1500 customers used the facility in the first week. Madeleine Wade noted the new 'Subway'–brand style sandwiches offered in the 'Studio Café' was popular with students.

New Football Facilities – Discussions with trustees of the Gauntlett Trust had not come to fruition and the College was now looking for an alternative site and in discussion with Havant Borough Council and Hampshire County Council. There was a further meeting scheduled for 26 November.

Minor Works and Maintenance – a full programme of works was carried out over the summer with redecoration in many areas and a lighting upgrade in parts of the East Building. A small store had been added to the North Building, and the roof of the recycling compound extended. Accommodation in the East and South East Building was refurbished as art had moved to North West Building 2.

Responding to Patricia Thompson the College Secretary noted that there was still a retention withheld from Leadbitter in respect of North West Building 2. A few weather-related issues were currently being resolved.

The update was RECEIVED.

796. Academy in Havant

The Principal referred members to his email to staff and governors of 21 October 2009 and a copy would be made available to Madeleine Wade. He read the first paragraph and noted progress was moving on apace and the school will close on 31 August 2010. He had been to the school on a number of occasions including the Public Meeting, the Parents' Evening, and to meet with the Senior Leadership Team and all staff. The GCSE pass rates 2007-2009 (18%,14%,10%) were totally unacceptable and a change of culture required. The school occupies a terrific site and the Principal is ambitious for the school and the people in the community and meets regularly with the new interim headteacher from a successful school in Basingstoke. The Secretary of State has agreed the proposal for the Academy to open 1 September 2010 and the Principal is working closely with Hampshire County Council. The post of headteacher (principal) will be advertised in December for an appointment just after Christmas and the Senior Leadership Team will be reviewed. He was confident the Academy would be part of the Building Schools for the Future programme, some £5 - £8 million, and was working closely with the County Architects. A new level 2 vocational skills centre was important to the community to provide modern up-to-date vocational experiences e.g. catering, fitness centre. His aim is for inclusivity, excellence and aspiration and for the academy to play its part as a 11-16 comprehensive school in Havant. There is an ambitious plan to increase enrolment from 500 to 700 to fit in with other schools in Havant and become a good school in Leigh Park alongside Park Community. He is working closely with primary schools and there will be extended services post-16, family learning, adult education opportunities. Currently 15% of pupils do not attend and homework is voluntary. The Department for Children Schools and Families is very bureaucratic and work was now being carried out with consultants. The Principal would continue to update governors on progress.

Yvonne Elliott noted that ultimately the Academy would benefit South Downs and in response to Laxmi Neave the Principal hoped that the College would have an opportunity to share the proposed facilities. Gwen Blackett considered that more students from Rowlands Castle may be encouraged to attend the Academy and then progress to South Downs.

The Principal's update was RECEIVED.

797. Safeguarding Children, Young Persons and Vulnerable Adults
(Doc.C09/29 was circulated with the agenda)

The College Secretary noted the Corporation's duty to review annually the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people under the Education Act 2002. The updated policy (Doc.C09/29) had not changed significantly but included some minor updates of how instances are reported, and contacts with HCC. Safeguarding was noted to be high on the Ofsted Inspection agenda and receives a limiting grade which can affect overall grades. The College's policy had been extended regarding abuse, harassment and bullying. It includes arrangements for supporting students who become ill at College by the two nurses; the counselling service; the CCTV system with over 100 monitored cameras; contractors are issued with badges and log in and out; contracted cleaning staff are CRB-checked. For a number of years CRB procedures have applied to all appointed staff. With effect from October the new Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) has been delivered by the CRB and by the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) responsible for maintaining the two lists for people barred from working with children and working with vulnerable adults, and checked as part of the CRB process. The Corporation sees the annual Health and Safety report and members are aware of the range of things the College does for safeguarding. Inspectors will look for this and there will be some more training for governors on safeguarding at the next meeting.

On the proposal of the Chairman it was AGREED unanimously -

- (i) That the Safeguarding Children, Young Persons and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures (Doc.C09/29) be ENDORSED by the Corporation and SIGNED by the Chairman,

[The Chairman thereupon SIGNED the report]

and

- (ii) That the report be RECEIVED.

798. Revised Disciplinary and Dismissal, Poor Performance and Grievance Procedures
(Doc.C09/30 was circulated with the agenda)

The College Secretary noted that the procedures agreed by the Finance and Employment Committee (Doc.FE08/13 23.06.08) had now been revised partly as a result of the Employment Act 2008 and subsequent ACAS Code of Practice which came into effect in April 2009. The College's revised procedures (Doc.C09/30) include poor performance and now has three clear stages of First Written Warning, Final Written Warning, Dismissal. This is parallel with but not part of the disciplinary procedure. The revised procedures have been thoroughly revised by the College's solicitors and were the subject of consultation with the two recognised unions, UCU for teaching staff and UNISON for support staff, and the Corporation was asked to agree the procedures.

Freddie Allgood raised the issue of access to internet sites and asked if procedures applied to access by staff at home as well as to the College's facilities. The College Secretary stated that if it were reported that members of staff had access to such sites at any time then it would be a disciplinary matter and be investigated, apart from it also being illegal.

The revised procedures (Doc.C09/30) were unanimously AGREED.

799. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was CONFIRMED as Thursday 10 December 2009 at 5.45 pm.

[The Meeting was declared closed at 7.40 pm]

SG/181109