

THE SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.30 pm on Thursday 22 March 2007 in the Committee Room.

Present: Andrew Turner (Chairman), Richard Andrews, Gwen Blackett, Yvonne Elliott, Wendy Gisborne, Donna Kinnair, Stephenie Linham, Michael Oakes (Principal), David Rowlinson, Patricia Thompson, Tony Welch

Apologies: Frederick Allgood, Philip Robinson

In Attendance: John Manterfield, Clerk to the Corporation
Julius Mach, Head of Finance
Liz Norland, Head of Faculty – Business and Community
Susan Grantham, Minuting Secretary

The Chairman welcomed Liz Norland, Head of Faculty – Business and Community for Item 3.

662. Minutes (Circulated with the agenda)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December were AGREED whereupon the Chairman SIGNED the minutes.

663. Corporation Membership

The Clerk reported that the Search Committee had met earlier in the evening following notification that Cllr Tony Welch would be standing down as a Havant borough councillor at the May elections. He reminded members there were two vacancies on the Corporation (one business, one co-opted) and outlined the recommendations of the Search Committee. It was hoped to have a new Havant Borough Council member in place for the summer meeting.

It was AGREED unanimously on the recommendation of the Search Committee

- (i) That Tony Welch OBE, MA be appointed for four years as a Business Member under Clause 2(1)(a) of the Instrument of Government on his resignation as a local authority member with effect from 4 May 2007.
- (ii) That the Clerk seeks a nomination from Havant Borough Council for a successor to Cllr Tony Welch.

664. Committee Membership - re-appointments to the Audit Committee

The Clerk noted that two members' terms of office were due to expire and both members were willing to continue to serve on the Audit Committee.

On the proposal of Donna Kinnair, seconded by Patricia Thompson, it was AGREED unanimously that the following members be re-appointed to the Audit Committee:

- (i) Richard Andrews for a period of two years until 26 March 2009
- (ii) Yvonne Elliott for a period of two years until 17 March 2009

665. Instrument and Articles of Government (Doc. C07/01 was circulated with the agenda)

The Clerk reminded members that the Corporation had received revised Instrument and Articles of Government effective from 1 May 2006. In December the Government had issued an amendment as a modification direction to come into force 1 January 2007 which gave clarification in respect of what the Corporation may/may not delegate and powers to determine an appeal, as set out on Doc. C07/01.

The Modification Direction – Amendment to 2006 Instrument and Articles of Government was RECEIVED.

666. Skills for Life

The Principal introduced Liz Norland, recently appointed to the Senior Management Team as Head of Faculty, Business and Community with cross College responsibility for Skills for Life.

The Skills for Life Strategy 2000 had been introduced following the government survey that found that 1 in 5 adults were functionally illiterate. Skills for Life represented the ability to read, write and speak English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and society in general. Liz Norland outlined the national agenda in terms of targets (by 2007 1.5 million adults (16+) to achieve), curriculum/qualifications – to increase participation in basic skills and provide support for those for whom English is an additional language; South Downs College context - members of staff leading on delivery ; participation – in 2006/07 some 5000 South Downs students identified from screening at full-time enrolment (a substantial number of A Level students need support), benefit to students – increased qualifications, support to achieve main qualification aim, skills for employment and progression; and looking to the future – the introduction of Functional Skills by 2010.

Copies of the presentation slides are attached to the minutes and for further information members were referred to the DfES website www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus.

Much discussion followed on the resourcing/teaching of provision during primary/secondary school and college education, including:

- at what age functional skills resourcing should be aimed at pupils
- schools will inevitably base provision on what is required for league tables and other skills may disappear
- demands keep changing – same problems across the globe
- language was considered to be complex and needed to be delivered throughout education; some pupils have more motivation at College when more mature.

[Yvonne Elliott joined the meeting at 6.14 pm]

The Chairman thanked Liz Norland for her thoughtful presentation on Skills for Life

[Liz Norland left the meeting at 6.17 pm]

667. Premises Committee

(Doc.C07/02 was circulated with the agenda)

Richard Andrews noted discussion had focussed on the completion of the Reception Building and the new North West Building. Space utilisation was increasingly important and the percentage of usage was already very high.

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2007 were RECEIVED.

668. Academic Board

(Doc.C07/03 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal noted the two committees – Equality and Diversity, and Staff Development, had reported recent developments.

He referred members to the Ofsted/ALI visit in January to the area of Accounting, Business and Professional. This was part of their programme to see examples of good practice in a handful of successful colleges to report to other Colleges. At the same time an inspection of the area had been carried out, including class observations and meetings with staff and students, to ensure their view of excellence is current. The inspector's feedback was very positive. She had been extremely impressed, considered the area outstanding, had not

come across a College so well-resourced as South Downs and students had referred to the College as 'deluxe'.

The 14-19 curriculum developments were a major issue and the Principal would be making a presentation to the Corporation next year. The new specialised diplomas will give students a choice of following vocational diplomas, A Levels and apprenticeships, and part of the entitlement would be Functional Skills. Diplomas will be delivered by groups of schools and colleges working together in strength as a partnership rather than as individuals. He was chair of the Havant Consortium, comprising the 9 local schools and Havant College, and Highbury College will now also be part of that consortium working towards the introduction of diplomas in September 2009. The Principal was also part of the Portsmouth Consortium.

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2007 were RECEIVED.

669. Finance and Employment Committee

- (i) Minutes of Meeting 1 March 2007
(Doc.C07/04 was circulated with the agenda)

Stephenie Linham noted the College was just short of the challenging enrolment growth target of 9% but there would be no financial implication. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Corporation the Revised Revenue and Capital Budgets which is a separate item on the agenda. Members were sorry to hear of the death in service of a part-time teacher in Health and Care.

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2007 were RECEIVED.

- (ii) Revised Revenue and Capital Budgets 2006/2007
(Doc.C07/05 was circulated with the agenda)

The Principal reported the College had set a robust target of 9% and was in a very strong financial position. It was important not to negotiate targets below what is likely to be achieved in order to ensure all teaching is funded. A target of 8% would be achieved with no clawback as the College is within 3% of target. The budgets had been revised from what was set before the start of the year and we are more confident of final outturn. Members were referred to the overview on Page 2 - turnover in excess of £30 million, a payroll of over £21 million, £600,000 additional equipment, £870,000 building projects and a surplus of just less than £1 million. The North West Building will be paid for by the end of the following year out of surpluses and therefore there will be no debt. Considerable resources had been allocated for equipment and a 5.5% pay award to all staff. Page 8 indicated a strong cashflow position. Most of the funding came from the LSC. Page 9 detailed the building projects and equipment.

He was currently in the final stages of negotiating funding with the LSC for 2007/08.

The revised revenue and capital budgets for 2006/2007 were AGREED.

670. Standards and Quality
(Doc.C07/06 was circulated with the agenda)

The Chairman reported discussions had included the Self Assessment Report, which was a separate item on the Corporation agenda, and the Ofsted visit already covered by the Principal. Operational Targets 2007 had been copied to all governors. Some time had been spent discussing qualifications of teachers as outlined in the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2007 were RECEIVED.

671. Audit Committee

- (i) Minutes
(Doc.C07/07 was circulated on 16 March 2007)

Donna Kinnair noted it had been a very positive meeting and both sets of auditors had presented and been questioned on their reports. Referring firstly to the internal audit reports: Governance and Risk Management had received 'substantial assurance' with no issues and examples of good practice had been highlighted (14 other colleges audited had an average of 3 'merits attention' recommendations). Key Financial Controls review gave 'substantial assurance' that systems are robust with no issues raised. The report commended the work of the Finance Team and the Committee passed on their congratulations to the Head of Finance and his team (benchmarking figures noted 33 colleges received an average of 3.45 recommendations). Estate Management received 'substantial assurance' with three minor recommendations (benchmarking figures recorded an average of 4 recommendations). Learner Numbers (Arts and Sciences) received 'substantial assurance' with one minor recommendation (39 other colleges received an average of 4 recommendations). The Committee also received the external auditors Learner Numbers System Review which confirmed the College's position of 'low' risk with no significant matters to be brought to the attention of the Corporation. One minor issue had been raised.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2007 were RECEIVED.

- (ii) 2005/2006 Review of the ILR – Tenon Limited

The College Secretary confirmed the review of the ILR data was received by the Audit Committee and there were no issues arising requiring the attention of the Corporation.

672. College Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan
(Docs.C07/09 (i) and (ii) were circulated with the agenda)

The Principal noted the reports had been discussed in some detail at the Standards and Quality Committee. Both important documents are at the core of the quality of education and teaching. He outlined the annual quality cycle which included the published Operational Targets received by all staff and Governors. Heads of Curriculum and Faculty look at key indicators – retention, achievement, participation, enrolment for each of the curriculum areas (page 5). In the autumn term Heads of Curriculum work with their staff to develop an individual SAR and go before a panel comprising the two Heads of Faculty and Quality Manager to look at strengths/weaknesses and to grade. External inspectors are used to check observation results. In November each Head of Curriculum meets individually with the Principal to scrutinise the reports and finalise a grade. Cross college areas are also graded (Page 5). The Principal considered South Downs was a stronger College than when inspected in 2005 when Ofsted determined we were the leading general further education college inspected. The total SAR is put together and graded. The summary (page 18) showed that 84% of teaching and 80% of learning is graded good or better. The Principal considered a 'satisfactory' grading was unsatisfactory to South Downs.

The College had recently introduced a rolling programme of internal inspection, bringing in one external inspector to work alongside internal inspectors. The inspection of the two areas of Information Technology and Humanities had been completed the previous day. Humanities had been confirmed as Outstanding and ICT as Good and improving.

Yvonne Elliott, Head of Curriculum Sport and Public Services and College Branch Chairman of University College Union, confirmed staff morale was very high and staff enjoy good working conditions, endorsed by Wendy Gisborne. The College was good at sharing good practice, students enjoy and take a pride in their College.

The Principal highlighted the importance to improve year on year and demonstrated how the SAR and its findings linked with the Quality Improvement Plan. The College Operational Targets focus on weaknesses identified and progress is evaluated each June.

The College Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan 2007 were RECEIVED.

673. Corporation Self-Assessment and Review of Training Needs
(Doc.C07/10 was circulated with the agenda)

The Clerk noted the analysis was based on the FEFC inspection scale 1-5. The scores had been aggregated and indicators ranged between outstanding and good (1–2). The best scoring was question 4 'The Corporation actively supports and encourages the Principal in the executive of his considerable responsibilities'. The least best scoring were questions 11 'The Corporation periodically reviews the profile of its membership against that of the balance of the College community' and 12 'The Corporation has established procedures for the selection of new Members and for their subsequent induction'. Members discussed questions 11 and 12, 'and considered measures for improvement.

- The College Secretary suggested members may wish to review the induction process and look at the balance of the College community based on student statistics produced by the Equality and Diversity Committee.
- Corporation mentors had been introduced since the last review – in particular Yvonne Elliott and Wendy Gisborne mentoring the student members who were not present
- The Principal noted the difficulty in recruiting volunteers and this had been discussed at the Search Committee. It had been proposed to advertise the current co-opted vacancy at the College's Leigh Park Learning Centre.
- Members noted many people may not feel sufficiently confident to volunteer and there was the question of accountability.
- Public/private sectors and charities had problems recruiting volunteers, mainly due to people's very busy lifestyles.
- Hampshire County Council provide governor training courses but it was considered these focussed mainly on primary schools.

The Chairman noted the difficulties encountered in recruiting members. He considered the Corporation needed to be as reflective as possible of the local community and he was anxious to recruit from a diverse background including ethnic minorities. Governor training was useful and members needed to become familiar with the paper work e.g. accounts. He enquired what influence we may have when requesting the nomination of a new governor from Havant Borough Council. Gwen Blackett put forward the name of a local councillor who had lived and worked in Leigh Park for all of her life whom she considered would be a good representative of the people. It was noted a number of governors have daily contact with members of the community so perhaps we are not as far removed as we think.

The Principal considered it was important to have these discussions. He requested Yvonne Elliott and Wendy Gisborne follow up on student member absences. The College Secretary reminded members there had been a small amount of movement in the self-assessment scoring which was between outstanding and good (1-2). Real concern would be expressed if this had fallen to 3 (Satisfactory). Members had looked at the least best scores and discussed ways to address them. Many members find difficulty in marking themselves as 'outstanding'.

The analysis of the Corporation's Self Assessment was RECEIVED.

674. Health and Safety Report 2005/2006
(Doc.C07/11 was circulated with the agenda)

The College Secretary was pleased to report a good health and safety record for 2005/6. Health and safety was well embedded throughout the College. To contextualise the accident record there was a decrease of 9% of incidents against a 1.5% increase in full time equivalents. The Health and Safety Committee continued to meet termly, there was an

annual cycle of safety inspections and health and safety audits are carried out on a two-year cycle. External inspections are made by various bodies including Havant Borough Council Environmental Health. An independent inspection of the College Refectories scored in excess of 95%. A total of 211 accidents were reported, 16 resulting in hospital attendance (page 3), many occurred during sporting activities but none were serious. There had been a 19% reduction in the number of incidents involving hands and the number of burns fell from 25 to 6. Page 7 summarised injuries compared with the previous year. The two College Nurses provide advice on health promotion and first aid and last year saw over 1000 students. The Health and Safety Committee continues to look at key training and support for staff and students with much training including manual handling, fire safety and risk assessment embedded into College systems.

The Health and Safety Report for the last academic year was RECEIVED.

675. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was CONFIRMED as 5.30 pm on Thursday 5 July 2007

[The meeting was declared closed at 7.37 pm]

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