

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER 2010 at 11.00 a.m.

Present: Mr G R Baird, Mr M Hodgson, Dr J Johnston, Mr A R C Lane, Mr R Pope,
Mr C J P Watney

Apologies received: Mr C P Clementi,

In attendance: Mr I F Dumbleton, Mr S P Nicholls, Ms N Whitehead

In the Chair: Mr G R Baird

1650. **Declaration of interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

1651. **Minutes (Part I & II)** of the meeting held on 29th June 2010 were approved.

1652. **Matters arising**

Item 1637: Health & Safety Committee

The Director of Finance reported that the fire report had been received from the consultant suggesting some additional enhancements. These would be implemented as practical as part of the college's ongoing plan of improvements. A revised Health & Safety policy was in hand undertaken by the new H&S officer, Martin Emery.

Item 1643: Safeguarding: training

The Chair emphasised the importance of safeguarding training for all governors. In addition to the materials sent out and training events to-date, it was hoped to include further training as part of Planning day on 29th November, or alternatively, in conjunction with a meeting of the Governing Body.

Item 1644: Revised Instruments and Articles

The Clerk reported that draft I&As had been received from the YPLA closely followed by an acknowledgement that these would need further work to take account of individual college circumstances. For Collyer's there were issues of terminology and more particularly the composition of the Governing Body, the authority of foundation governors and the position of trustees. The Government announcement in July that funding for (FE and) Sixth Form colleges would come direct from the YPLA and not via local authorities was causing additional confusion as to the arrangements which would be in place, not least because the YPLA was still understood to be on the list of quangos under review.

1653. **Report from the Premises Sub-Committee**

Paper: Minutes of the meeting of 13th July 2010

i) The Chairman of the Premises Sub-Committee reported that the original plans for Home Economics provision had been amended to make them more affordable. Work was expected to start in October for new equipment in room R101 with further upgrading in R102 to take place

next summer. The Wolfson foundation were being kept in touch with developments and how their funding would be deployed.

ii) Outstanding snagging issues in the new John Dew building meant that retention monies had been held back whilst problems were resolved. There were still some ventilation problems on which work was progressing in order to create a more comfortable working environment.

iii) Part II Minutes (Criterion h) Information considered to be commercially sensitive;

1654. Examination Results 2010

Paper: A2/AS Level Results-Summer 2010

The Vice-Principal explained that, at 98.7%, the overall pass rate at A2 was the best ever achieved by the College (2009: 98.3%) - and more particularly, at 55.9%, the percentage of passes at A-B had exceeded the College's target of 55%. This was a significant figure in that it meant an improvement in the college's value-added performance which continued to be a key goal. The first year of the A* grade had also been successful with A* constituting 8.3% of grades, just above the national average. The value-added systems of ALPS and ALIS showed the best combined results achieved by the college for both A2 and AS. He explained that these measures assessed a student's achievement based on their GCSE performance against a comprehensive database reflecting average national results. He confirmed that with national results, including Horsham's three feeder schools, all improving, the College's results would also need to continue to improve to maintain its value-added performance. The Committee thanked the Vice Principal for his considerable efforts in securing the improvements in performance.

The College was satisfied that its students had also fared well in securing the highest number of University places ever in spite of the gloomy predictions seen in the press. It was felt that this was partly due to sensible groundwork in encouraging students at the application stage to balance aspirational goals with sensible insurance choices.

The Vice-Principal confirmed that governors would be most welcome to participate in their link Faculty SAR (Self-Assessment Review) meetings with the Principal and Vice Principal to assist in the process of review and identification of potential for improvement for the future. External members would include Mike Marchant of the Mercers' Company.

Action: Clerk to circulate the detailed timings of the meetings to be held in the first week of November.

1655. Enrolment and Student Numbers 2010

The Vice Principal reported that (excluding those enrolled on Adult Education courses) the number of 16-18 students on roll was 1590 (of which c.36 were international students). With some further account to be taken, for example, of GCSE retakes, the College expected to meet its target of 1566 funded students. Adult Ed enrolment was also thought to be progressing quite well. The Committee congratulated the College, and particularly the Assistant Principal (Progress) and his admissions team, for achieving this challenging target which constituted the highest number of students in the history of the college.

[11.57a.m.Dr J Johnston joined the meeting]

The Committee noted the increased number of international students as well as the constraints on these numbers. The Vice Principal assured the meeting that the College had been graded high for its checks on international students before and during their stay. Good overseas agents assisted at the early stages and the college's tutorial and pastoral support ensured that any problems or absences were pursued.

[12.05p.m.Mr R Pope left the meeting]

1656. Staffing Update

The Principal outlined the teaching and support staff who had taken up their posts in September including the new Security Officer who was proving a valuable presence. One teaching position (as Subject Leader in Psychology) and one support staff post (as a systems librarian) were currently being advertised.

1657. Tanzania project update

The Principal explained that a team of college staff had once again visited Tanzania in the summer. Their efforts had been covered in the Mercers' annual report which it was hoped all governors might receive in due course. The work had two main strands. On training in science, a full report had been submitted by Joe Brock to the Institute of Physics. 7 schools in Tanzania including a teacher training college had received the full package of support of both equipment and training, 6 a smaller equipment package but full training and a further 9 cascade presentations. Practical training had included experiments to demonstrate dynamics, waves, light, sound, statics and radioactive decay. Funding was available for this aspect for a further two years. The second strand was the Collyer's co-operative work initiated by Sally Miller. Reports to-date on the effective use of equipment such as sewing machines as well as the money provided were very encouraging. Mike Branfield had also been using his carpentry and joinery background to good effect and was seeking contributions of handtools to support such efforts to encourage self-sustaining projects. The next stage was to gain charitable status for this aspect on which advice was being sought from a local charity, Pageant. It was felt that the staff were coping well with the additional workload, with additional support with the charity work possible owing to the financial contribution from the Mercers' Company. Further help was being sought to help with shipping, transport and contacts at airports to help, for example, with customs clearance.

The Committee also discussed the benefits for Collyer's students. They had been involved in preparing training materials and encouraged to think laterally about how to demonstrate scientific principles without the availability of electricity and water. The food and nutrition students had also benefited from a comparison of diets. The college was due to hold a further fund-raising cabaret evening on 16th December which governors would be welcome to attend.

1658. Curriculum: SFBac

The Principal circulated an article which had appeared in the current AOSSEC magazine, Leader, explaining the principles behind the SFBac. This was timely as it coincided with the first term of the new pilot after a year of preparations. Further colleges were expected to join the scheme next year. The Principal also referred to the recent interest shown by the Secretary of State for Education in an English baccalaureat to be based on GCSEs but reflecting a similar interest in demonstrating a breadth of experience. David Igoe, Chief Executive of the SFCF, had previously met with Michael Gove and acquainted him with the values and thinking behind the SFBac. The new college intake and their parents had been informed of the SFBac as part of

their induction and now had the opportunity of recording and tracking their contribution to it through 'My Progress'.

1659. **Learner/Student Voice Policy**

The Principal explained that it was good practice to have a strategy for learner voice which set out how students would be consulted and involved in the management of their learning experience. The new policy sought to reflect good practice well established in the college as well as more recent initiatives such as the Safeguarding Committee. Given the importance of learner feedback to the college's quality assurance mechanisms, it was proposed that reporting would be through the Quality and Standards Committee. Members suggested a couple of points of clarification before approval by the Governing Body and agreed that they would prefer to see at least a prevalence of the term 'student' rather than 'learner' including an amendment to the title of the policy.

[12.35pm Mr Hodgson left the meeting]

1660. **AoB**

- a) **Funding** : The Chair raised concerns about the potential impact of the forthcoming Spending Review on college funding. A recent AoC briefing referred to a percentage cut in 16-18 funding as well as the possible withdrawal of the EMA. The Principal explained that she and SMT were seeking to cushion the college as far as possible. Whilst target numbers had been reached and should be consolidated for future years, budgeting to-date had been based on conservative estimates. Whilst further increases in student numbers would be extremely difficult, higher targets could be set whilst maintaining good but efficient set sizes. Of more concern were announcements about the possible impact on Adult Education and Work-based learning. Further discussion of this was proposed for the next meeting of the Committee.
- b) **Capital loan** : The College had yet to decide when best to pay off some of the capital loan, seeking a balance between taking advantage of low interest rates against the cost of a repayment penalty.

1661. **Meeting assessment**

The Committee welcomed the college's best ever performance at A level and the success in improving its value-added scores. They also found the presentation of the results helpful in gaining both an overview and a detailed picture of performance across all subject areas. It was hoped this would facilitate any subsequent involvement in the SAR discussions. The increase in numbers provided some assurance on funding against a background of potential Government cuts. Members were pleased that the home economics provision could be improved without too significant expenditure in line with the prudent approach recommended at their last meeting.

1662. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 2nd November 2010 at 9.30 a.m.

The meeting ended at 12.47p.m.

Chairman

Date

NCW 28.9.10