

GOVERNING BODY
Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on 16 May 2014

Present: R Carter (Chairman) R Millea (Vice Chairman)
 A Gordon-Stables C Styles
 J Finn C Manning
 S Gerber A Maltpress
 S Clarke K Golding
 D Wildridge J Bloomfield
 N Savvas, Principal

In attendance: D J Howells (Deputy Principal)
 M Wagner (Vice Principal, Business and Community)
 L Johnson (Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality)
 J Bridges (Clerk to the Corporation)

Standing Declaration of Interests declared by members:

R Millea is the Clerk to the Corporation at South Essex College. He is also a member of the UCS Audit Committee.

		<u>Action</u>
1	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies for absence were received from M Symonds and W Burrlock. Non-attendance will be recorded for C Newton.</p> <p>Prior to the business items of this meeting A Gordon-Stables proposed the Corporation pass a formal resolution that this Governing Body expresses their hearty congratulations to our former Principal, Dr Ann Williams, on the conferment upon her Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Edmundsbury and admission to be an Honorary Freeman of the Borough accordingly, at a special meeting of the Council called for that purpose on 15 May 2014. Seconded by R Millea. It was further agreed that an acknowledgement commemorating this honour will be written, signed by the Corporation and presented to Ann Williams at an appropriate event.</p>	<p>JBridges</p> <p>MWagner</p>
2	<p><u>Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2014</u> The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages G084-G089) were agreed as a correct record subject to changing the words 'is it' under item 5.2.2 in the first sentence to read 'it is'.</p>	<p>JBridges</p>
3	<p><u>Matters Arising</u> From the Corporation meeting held on 21 March 2014 The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report (minute book page G090).</p> <p>The 'Develop Anglia' brand has been launched. The Vice Principal, Business and Community will provide the Corporation with a link to the new provision.</p> <p>Sue Daley, former Corporation member and former Principal of Boston College has been supporting the Ofsted Task and Finish Group to prepare for an Ofsted Inspection. In April 2014 the group took part in a 'Mocksted' inspection facilitated by Sue Daley.</p> <p>The Governance Task and Finish Group will meet at the beginning of June 2014 to explore the opportunity to change governance arrangements and a proposal will be brought to the Corporation at the 17 July 2014 meeting for consideration.</p>	<p>MWagner</p>

The College has secured a bandwidth upgrade to 1Gb and this is expected to happen sometime between August and November this year. The Chairman of Governors has asked the Senior Management Team to bring a strategic report to the Corporation at the July 2014 meeting to detail the IT solutions to improve College Wi-Fi and connectivity.

All other actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

4 Quality and Performance

4.1 Quality Key Performance Indicators

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G091-G096).

The report confirmed that attendance is below the College target of 95% at 89% overall for Classroom Based Learning. Student non-attendance is followed up on the day of absence and a concerted effort has been made to clear unmarked registers.

Retention overall has declined by 3% since the last report to the Corporation in March 2014. 16-18 retention is at 94% across all levels against the National Rate of 89% and 19+ retention stands at 90% against the National Rate of 87%. There have been significant retention issues particularly with level 3 Access to HE courses where students' circumstances have changed resulting in them leaving the course.

It is proposed that Access to HE courses in future will be delivered as a one year intensive course rather than spreading the qualification over a two year programme. Members asked if the retention rate was likely to fall further by the year end.

It was confirmed that every effort is being made to retain students and the new student progress tracking system is helping staff to identify those who are falling behind so that intervention can be put in place for the learners who are predicted not to succeed.

This system has highlighted that course planning and timetabling in the future will need to be changed so that modules and assessments are 'short and fat' rather than 'long and thin' in order for students to cope better with assignment deadlines and to prevent end loading. It was noted, however, that the benefits of introducing this system are not likely to be realised until 2014/15 and therefore only minimal impact on success in this academic year is likely to be seen.

The Corporation received a tabled paper of extracted data from the recently released Ofsted Data Dashboard. The link to the site will be shared with members once the accuracy of College data has been confirmed. The paper provided members with an insight into the National Rates for 2012/13 and how the College has performed benchmarked against other Eastern Region Colleges. It was noted that the Level 3 National Rate has increased by 3% and while the College had been on National Rate this increase now means that our data is 3% below.

The data received has been filtered by the 16-18 Level 2 data which shows the Colleges' results in the first quintile for Entry and Level 2. Level 1 and Intermediate Apprenticeships are in the second quintile. Advanced Apprenticeships in the third quintile and Level 3, fourth quintile.

LJohnson

Action

Levels 1, 2 and 3 for 19+ are all in the second quintile with Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeships in the third quintile. Members asked that the Curriculum and Quality Committee receives a full report at their meeting to be held in June 2014 and that this is further reported to the Corporation at the 17 July 2014 meeting. The report will include comparisons drawn between our data and that of Outstanding Colleges. In addition, the data tables and appendices in the College's 2012/13 SAR will be updated to reflect the newly published National Rates.

LJohnson

LJohnson

The projected 'best case' Apprenticeship Success rates are predicted to be higher than previous years. The actual success rates currently reported are suppressed by withdrawals the majority of which fall in the early part of an apprenticeship programme. Members expressed concern that the current Success Rate as reported suggested a more negative result. It was agreed that the report would be reviewed so that the information could be presented differently to reflect the projected out-turn.

MWagner

Good or better observations of teaching and learning currently stands at 88% and the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality was tasked to find out what percentage of the total number of College lessons that this represents. She will report back to the Corporation. It was also noted that the new Director of Performing Arts was highly commended by the external observers as a rigorous observer and he will be utilised by the College to support other staff who are new to the observation process.

LJohnson

4.1.1 HE Retention Report

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G097-G099).

Attrition relates to the number of students who leave the course before attempting the final assessment. The attrition rate of 2% in the table will be checked as it is thought that the stated rate of 3.9% in the paper was the accurate figure.

MWagner

The report detailed the six courses where retention has declined and the reason why students have left them. It was noted that attrition and retention rates can be significantly impacted by one person leaving the course from a small cohort. The HE dedicated support post for students has helped to minimise the attrition rate in the year.

4.2 Finance Key Performance Indicators

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G100-G101).

The main concern is fee income which continues to be significantly below budget and is not expected to improve by the year end. Full cost provision continues to have a shortfall in full cost courses due mainly to the market being undermined by ESF project funding that is supporting Skills in the Workplace and consequently reducing demand in this area of provision.

The College remains compliant with bank covenants. This key performance indicator will include one and two year forecast columns in future reports.

DJHowells

Members noted that the staff to income ratio has dropped from the budget year to date percentage of 66.4% down to 62.9% month to date and queried whether

the reduction in staffing has impacted the student experience. FTE savings have been achieved partly by more stringent consideration of the replacement of support posts when staff leave while teaching posts are being replaced. There has also been a concerted effort to reduce the number of hourly paid and fractional posts and to consolidate these into fixed term appointments thus reducing the head count of staff but maintaining the FTE number. This approach will improve the quality and consistency of teaching and enhance the experience for students.

4.2.1 Financial Performance Report

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G102-G104).

Overall, the College is anticipating a surplus on operations for the year and there may be some prior year adjustments increasing the published surplus for the year.

The College will be undertaking a number of capital projects across the summer, most notably the replacement of the Edmund House boilers with Biomass boilers to provide heating and hot water to Suffolk House, Edmund House and the Engineering Centre. It is also planned to improve our existing facilities for students and this will involve moving the Engineering, Machining and Welding provision to the Milburn Centre, releasing space for higher level programmes at the main campus. The College is anticipating investing £1.5m on these and other projects outlined in the Property Strategy. However, the College has recently been successful in attracting a grant of £420K from the SFA towards these works.

Cash balances remain high and these are forecast to increase by the year end. The College is in good financial health which is down slightly from our previous outstanding rating but, given the recent investment in capital facilities and the reductions in funding, this is to be expected. It was noted that the decision made by the Corporation in July 2013 to remove the £300K contingency line has been adhered to and there has been no contingency in the budget this academic year.

5. Strategic Matters

5.1 Governors Update – Collaboration Update and new projects

Confidential item under paragraph 18(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government

5.2 Draft Property Strategy

The strategy was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G107-G122).

A tour of the main campus and the Milburn Centre preceded the April meeting of the Finance and Property Committee. This opportunity enabled members to understand the issues and where potential development or refurbishment may be part of the future property strategy. The draft document received by the Corporation has been presented in the context that the Finance and Property Committee recommends the broad content of the strategy for approval while acknowledging that further work to finalise the document will be required. This work will be completed and the final document presented to the Corporation for approval at the 17 July 2014 meeting.

To achieve the educational objectives and deliver its vision, the College needs to improve high quality learning facilities that are designed around the curriculum demands and provide appropriate space for students.

The Property Strategy has been written based on a fundamental review of the College's estate and provides a plan for its management, rationalisation and development. The strategy provides a clear direction for the College for a period of at least three years.

The table on page 7 details the proposed phase of works which includes moving the Engineering provision from the main campus to the Milburn Centre, refurbishing Performing Arts and expanding Suffolk House foyer and HE Common Room plus installing a Biomass Heating System to replace Edmund House boilers. Phases 3, 4 and 5 would be projected to commence into years 2015/16 and beyond.

The Deputy Principal confirmed that the year 2014/15 will be the last year that the SFA allocates capital grant funding. In future capital funding allocations will come via the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

When the College completes the summer work planned for this year it is anticipated that the general condition rating detailed in appendix 2 of the strategy will improve in some areas from satisfactory to good. It was noted that any arising opportunity, such as including a strategy to provide HE student accommodation, can be added to the Property Strategy at any time.

6. Information, Discussion and Decisions

6.1 *Academic Partnerships, Business Development and Adult Education Update*

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G123-G128).

The Vice Principal, Business and Community confirmed that the opportunity, suggested by a member at the Corporation meeting in March 2014, to develop and deliver teacher training and development programmes for schools is not a prospect for the College to entertain at this time. Such an action would put the College in direct competition with an established provider and the preference is to build on partnership work in order to secure other opportunities with apprenticeships and learning support teachers in the future.

The pilot for Kids College was launched earlier in May. Activities include craft workshops, working with clay, French, German and Spanish for kids courses. Parents while on site at the College are encouraged not to attend the class with their children but consider visiting the In Vogue Salon or perhaps signing up for a Saturday Workshop available for adults on the campus. The Vice Principal, Business and Community was asked to report back about Kids College at the 17 July 2014 Corporation meeting.

It was noted that the Anglia Business Exhibition this year went well. The Business Card Competition hosted by the College attracted many companies to the College stand.

MWagner

6.2 **Committee Chairs Summary Reports**

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G129-G132).

HR (meeting held on 18 March 2014)

There was nothing further to report.

Finance and Property (meeting held on 30 April 2014)

The Corporation acknowledged that under the delegated powers of the Finance and Property Committee the normal tender process to move the Engineering department over the summer has been waived. A contractor has been appointed who will lead and engage with different contractors for key packages and the College will have the opportunity to review those tenders and approve them in advance of commitment. The College is also engaged with an independent cost consultant. The decision to waive the normal tender process will enable the College to carry out the essential works over the summer to meet the resource and facility needs of students.

7 **Governance**

7.1 **Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference and Membership**

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G133-G135).

The Remuneration Committee was concerned that the number of Committee members is too low. The current quorum (40%) allowed for key decisions to be taken by only two governors so the Committee recommended to the Corporation that this be changed by increasing membership to five with a quorum requirement of three. D Wildridge expressed an interest to join the Committee membership. The amendments to the Committee Terms of Reference and the appointment of D Wildridge were approved by the Corporation. **Proposed** by J Finn and **seconded** by R Millea.

7.2 **Governors First Hand Week Feedback**

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G136-G141).

The Chairman of Governors thanked everyone who was involved in the week. It gave governors the opportunity to meet new people, explore new places and see the College from the students' perspective. The word cloud revealed the most prominent words to describe the week as Informative, Interesting, Enthusiastic and Revealing. The word 'frustration' in the cloud related to a visit to the Stowmarket Local Learning Centre where the team at the centre were found to be enthusiastic but frustrated that the advantages of the resources at the outreach centres were underutilised. The Vice Principal, Business and Community will take this back to the Head of Adult Education.

It is proposed that Governors First Hand will be an annual event. The Chairman of Governors will write a message for Briefings to thank staff on behalf of the Corporation. The focus next time, it was agreed, would be focused on the student experience and learning. J Finn, governor lead for Student Engagement, will convene a group to evaluate this event and plan for the next.

MWagner

JFinn

8 **Any other business**

• *Representational Activities*

Governors have attended a range of representational activities over the weeks that include the Hair and Beauty Show, Princes Trust Awards, Fashion Fusion Event and the Business, Art and Service Industries Faculty Team meetings.

The Senior Management Team has been tasked to think about how the College can share case study complaints and compliments with the Corporation at meetings in order for members to obtain a deeper understanding of issues and how they are dealt with.

• *Prizegiving – Monday 30 June 2014*

Governors attending the event will be asked to accompany and network with sponsoring employers.

SMT

9 **Review of meeting**

Members commented that the agenda for the meeting was well balanced.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 17 July 2014 at 2.00pm. Room TG1.16

Meeting ended at 4.55pm